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**Greek Roma in Higher Education
A Qualitative Investigation of Educational Success**

Gkofa, Panagiota

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**Greek Roma in Higher Education:
A Qualitative Investigation of Educational Success**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education Research
(Specialism: Sociology of Education)**

**Department of Education and Professional Studies
School of Social Science and Public Policy
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Abstract

Much of the research that deals with Roma education in Greece concentrates on the high dropout rates and low attainment of this community, contributing towards a negative view of Roma's educational achievement. In contrast, this study investigates the trajectories of twenty Roma who can be regarded as educationally 'successful' as they have all entered higher education.

In this qualitative study, in-depth interviews were undertaken with these participants to elicit their experiences and accounts of what contributed to their educational success, their perceptions of success and their suggestions on how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece. The sample reflects Roma heterogeneity in Greece in terms of socio-economic status, locality and gender in particular. Two theoretical contributions frame this study. Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capital and field are deployed as key analytical tools to illuminate the participants' family backgrounds, their pre-university educational experiences and the forms of support that facilitated their access to higher education. This study also draws on Fraser's economic, cultural and associational dimensions of social justice to explore the participants' perceptions and experiences of success and understand what the participants propose for developing suitable policies for Roma's future education in Greece.

The findings are organised into three main clusters. The first set of findings deals with the factors that contributed towards the participants' uptake of higher education. Supportive parenting and teacher mentoring made a significant difference to the participants' educational success, according to their accounts. For those participants from a more privileged background, accessing higher education was experienced as being more the norm. The second set of findings suggests that individual experiences and beliefs underpin the participants' constructions of success and educational success. There is a focus on the female participants' views and experiences as they sometimes face additional difficulties in

accessing education because of intersections of sex/gender and Roma culture. Male and female participants highlighted the role that aspects of traditional culture still play in shaping educational success, mainly with reference to a longstanding pattern of early marriages in the community. However, the gender gap inside the Roma community is being mitigated, according to the participants. The final set of findings relates to the participants' recommendations about how best to support Roma pupils in Greece. Some interventions addressing the Roma were suggested but only on a short-term basis, in order to benefit the Roma without adding to their further marginalisation. Tackling poverty related issues for the whole student population was prioritised over offering any targeted provision to the Roma as a separate group. The study concludes by discussing key research limitations, identifying research areas for further development, raising implications for policy and practice and by calling for more attempts to enhance Greek Roma's educational progression.

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Chapter 1. Introduction to my Thesis

1.1. Introduction

Most days, when I left my home alone when I was a child, mainly to go to school, I always kept in mind my family's advice not to approach or talk to strangers. Many times I heard stories about old Roma women who carried young non-Roma children inside their big bags! I was brought up in a region close to which many Roma used to live. The majority of these Roma were not educated and lived in huts and tents in a gypsy encampment near my hometown. From my childhood, I learned that most non-Roma are suspicious of Roma people. I realised that people were afraid of those Roma who would call at our houses to ask for old useless objects and at the same time suspected the Roma in cases of any robberies.

As a student at school, I never had Roma classmates. When I entered university to study Education in order to become a primary teacher, some of my professors were actively participating in programmes for Roma education. In the first semester of my studies, a lecturer saw me holding some prizes from the Greek State Scholarship Foundation (for my grades), congratulated me and asked me about myself. When I told him where I came from, he asked me if I was interested in visiting one of the new Roma schools which had recently been established near my hometown. This is how I started finding out about the Roma students in Greece. I will never forget my first day at the Roma school in the beginning of September 2003. How disappointed I felt when I saw the prefabricated classrooms in a muddy yard... The school looked neglected and the children looked unkempt. Some days later, when I returned, Ms Semeli (pseudonym of the teacher) was hugging the children – despite their wearing dirty clothes - and was touching their mouths in order to help them pronounce Greek words in the right way. In this school, I started becoming a researcher. I conducted a small-scale study about the socialisation of Roma students; this was my degree

dissertation. My Master's dissertation focused on this school, using it as a case study to explore the types of educational practice that are dominant in school settings characterised by student diversity as well as the training needs of teachers who teach in such settings.

As a primary teacher, I have always worked in mainstream public primary schools. When I was teaching the 2nd grade, I remember two Roma girls in the 4th grade always being together during the school breaks; they never played with other non-Roma children – or maybe the other non-Roma children never played with them. When I was a teacher of the 6th grade, I had a Roma student who could not read and write properly at the age of 11-12 years old. I do not know how much I helped him concerning the courses I taught, but I tried hard to make him a member of the class. I was very happy when he came on his first school excursion; in the past he had never participated. And as he told me, this had been his first time in Athens.

I also remember that I did not understand how I was supposed to report the number of the Roma students in my classroom each time we had to collect relevant data as there are no specific indicators for this identity (in contrast, I had access to relevant documents for my students of Albanian origin). Moreover, I cannot forget a father, an active member of the Committee of Parents of our school, who was strongly opposed to the registration of Roma children at our school. I remember that I asked my colleagues: 'Would these parents be so negative towards the Roma children if, during surgery, their child needed blood or a vital organ and these came from a Roma child?' The answer I received (from my colleagues at school) was that I was very romantic and that my experience would teach me that theories presented at university are very far from school reality in practice.

During my studies, I became aware of the literature concerning the education of Roma in Greece. Many researchers have pointed out that the Roma in Greece are a group in danger of social exclusion (Exarchos, 1998; Chrysakis, 2004). Separation practices affecting Roma children at

school have been reported (Nikolaou, 2009; Dragonas, 2012). Vergidis (1995a) refers to the 'active' and 'passive' exclusion of Roma children at school. Varnava-Skoura et al. (2012) talk of active exclusion where Roma's enrolment is refused and of passive exclusion where Roma's physical presence in class is tolerated but the Roma students do not participate in the educational process (for more, see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.). These exclusions are evidenced by data that shows that some Roma children still attend separate types of schooling (Dragonas, 2012).¹ There are also complaints at a European level about the racism and exclusion experienced by many Roma in Greece (Greek Helsinki Monitor, 2006).

In order to illustrate this exclusion, I refer to an indicative event of Roma segregation. In September 2004, local officials prevented Roma children's enrolment at the local primary school in Aspropyrgos (a city southwest of Athens). In this area, Roma mainly live in settlements in poor conditions, with reduced access to water, sanitation and electricity. Signs such as 'No Roma child will enter this school. You are not going to have access here, that's all!', signaled the local non-Roma parents' attitudes. After a court hearing to resolve this dispute, Roma students were able to attend the primary school, although they were placed in a separate building where only Roma students were registered. Despite the Court's decision to protect Roma rights, in this case, the outcome was that a segregated and separate school was set up (New, 2013).

During the last two decades, considerable attempts have been made to encourage the educational inclusion of Roma students, especially through programmes funded by the Greek State and conducted by Greek universities aimed at encouraging Roma children to attend school during the compulsory phase of education (for more details, see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.). All these interventions were expected to have a positive impact on the education of Roma children and therefore

¹ According to data coming from the 'Eurybase - Organisation of the education system in Greece 2008/09', during the school year 2007-2008, 2,842 Roma children attended 'reception' classes in primary education.

the potential to influence Roma pupils' future. According to Gotovos (2002, p. 171) "in 1997 only 25% of Roma children aged 6-12 attended primary school. The percentage had risen to 76% in June 2002". However, Chatzissavidis (2007) notes that almost 50% of Roma children are still not registered at school and many Roma children drop out early without acquiring basic reading and writing skills. As a result, despite the positive developments of the last few years in Greece concerning Roma children's education, significant problems still exist (Mitsis, 2009).

Although much is known about the social exclusion of Roma in Greece and the difficulties that Roma children face in Greek schools, cases of Roma people who have followed successful educational paths have not been systematically examined. I have decided to reconceptualise the issue of Roma Education in Greece by 'reversing' the deficit constructions that tend to dominate both in the research literature and policy discourse by focusing on those cases of Roma who entered higher education. In contrast to the usual emphasis on Roma's failure in Greek education, I explore their success using Bourdieu's concepts – such as *social reproduction*, *habitus*, *field*, (lack of) *capital* – which are more often used to explain students' failure in education. Moreover, I draw on Fraser's social justice concepts in order to examine my participants' views and experiences of success as well as their recommendations concerning how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece. By exploring cases of Roma in Greece who have continued into higher education this thesis represents an attempt to begin to fill this gap. Drawing on in-depth interviews with twenty Roma who have accessed higher education, the aim of the research is to shed light on how these Roma account for their educational success and the factors which contributed to their success with a view to yielding results that can usefully inform the development of policies to enhance the education of Roma students in Greece.

Although the cases of Roma who succeed in education are few, at least on the basis of the information accessed and provided in my thesis, these cases do matter. In part these cases matter because they can be

used as positive examples within Roma education to inspire others to succeed. But more importantly, I would suggest that if educational researchers and educationalists construct theoretical arguments about how social transformation can take place through education on the basis of the accounts of people who were involved and experienced it, then policies aiming at boosting non-privileged students' progression may well be more effective.

1.2. The Education of Roma: Introduction

Although Roma communities are 'super-diverse' (Tremlett, 2014), the Roma are often regarded as a homogenous group. One common feature of many Roma groups, however, is the discrimination they have experienced for decades. According to many researchers, the Roma form the most disadvantaged ethnic minority in Europe (Lloyd, & McCluskey, 2008; Bhopal & Myers 2009; Themelis, 2009a; D'Arcy, 2014a). Before I turn to the Greek context where my research is conducted, in this section, I provide a brief overview of aspects regarding the Roma and their education.

- *The education of Roma in the UK*: In the UK context, aspects regarding the education of the Roma have been well-considered by researchers and policymakers (e.g. in 2003, the Department for Education and Skills published the guide "Aiming high: raising the achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils. A guide to good practice"). Therefore, best practices and positive interventions implemented in the UK could be useful in other settings (e.g. in Greece in the case of my study). In the UK, the Roma constitute one of the most marginalised communities (Smith & Greenfields, 2012). The terms Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are frequently used interchangeably to refer to this community (Bhopal & Myers 2009; Lander, 2011; D'Arcy, 2014a). 'Gypsy/Roma' and 'Travellers of Irish heritage' have been officially recognised as ethnic categories in England and Wales since 2003 (Bhopal & Myers 2009). As in Greece, the Roma experience difficulties in UK schools which are well-documented in

the literature (Smith & Greenfields, 2012; D'Arcy, 2014b), mainly in terms of their erratic attendance and reduced academic performance (Bhopal & Myers 2009). Although Roma access to primary school has improved, their involvement in secondary schooling is still limited (Derrington & Kendall, 2008; Bhopal & Myers 2009; D'Arcy, 2014b). Roma groups are often discriminated against on the basis of their perceived cultural differences compared to the mainstream (non-Roma) community (D'Arcy, 2014b). Discrimination and negative attitudes against the Roma by non-Roma teachers and pupils are recognised as contributing to their reduced school engagement and performance (Derrington & Kendall, 2008; D'Arcy, 2014b; Bhopal & Myers 2015). In contrast, when suitable learning environments and educational experiences are provided to Roma pupils, their progress is comparable to any other group (D'Arcy, 2014b). In the UK context, although there are often tensions between the state and the Gypsy-Traveller groups (Clark, 2008), the implementation of some services, interventions and educational practices appear helpful for the Roma. For instance, the Traveller Education Services (TESs) help the engagement of Gypsy-Traveller communities with the education system (Bhopal, 2004) through securing Roma's access to school places and offering appropriate support for individual families (Bhopal, 2011). In some cases, home education often appears a better and more suitable educational option than formal schooling to Gypsy and Traveller parents (D'Arcy, 2014a; Bhopal and Myers, 2015).² From this discussion, it seems that there are some parallels between the UK and the Greek settings (e.g. the erratic attendance and early dropouts of Roma pupils) but also some differences (e.g. the Roma in Greece do not officially represent a minority group (Kostadinova, 2011); few Roma in Greece travel throughout the country (Markou, 2008)). However, some practices and initiatives implemented in the UK context (such as the provision of home education) might helpfully inform relevant policy and practice in the Greek context.

² Home education is provided as a legal educational alternative in England (D'Arcy, 2014a), although it is subjected under scrutiny (Bhopal & Myers 2015).

- *Roma's educational success*: At a European level, despite the numerous policies developed in relation to the inclusion of Roma, in practical terms, significant changes in Roma lives have not been reported (Miskovic, 2013). Roma remain marginalised and discriminated against in all EU countries (D'Arcy, 2014a). As far as education is concerned, Roma children remain among the lowest academic achievers in many European countries (Symeou, Luciak & Gobbo, 2009). However, some studies have started to examine contexts where the Roma have experienced some educational success. For instance, Abajo and Carrasco's study investigated Roma's educational success in Spain (2004, cited in Bereményi & Carrasco, 2015, p. 154). Kende (2007) examined cases where Roma students were accessing university level education in Hungary. Both these studies also investigated aspects of Roma's identity and found that educationally successful Roma maintain their Roma identity and sense of belonging to the community even when they attain a degree of social mobility through success at the tertiary level.

My doctoral study focuses on the Greek context to examine cases of Greek Roma who have succeeded in education as they have all entered higher education. As detailed in Chapter 4, I deploy the term 'educational success' to shift from a deficit perspective focusing on issues such as Roma underachievement and early drop out to foreground Roma educational progression at a higher level. I take Roma entrance to higher education as a marker of educational success because higher education holds high symbolic value in the Greek context (Livanos, 2010). For many decades it has been regarded as a lever of upward social mobility (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011; Themelis, 2013). In the following section, I present my study's research questions and in Chapter 2 I explore the education of Roma in Greece in more depth.

1.3. Aim of the Thesis and Research Questions

This thesis investigates the perceptions and experiences of twenty Roma adults concerning their educational success. These cases of Roma

are unusual as few Roma in Greece have accessed higher education. The research is organised around three core research questions:

- What factors facilitate the educational success of my participants?
- In what ways do my participants describe educational success and to what extent do they consider themselves to be successful?
- What are my participants' suggestions for improving Roma children's education in Greece (policy and practice)?

1.4. The Language used concerning the Roma in Greece

In Greek literature, the most common words used for the Roma are 'Tsigganos' and 'Athigganos'.³ The word 'Yiftos', which would be a more precise translation for the word 'Gypsy', usually has negative connotations. This word is considered insulting and is mostly used (at least in Southern Greece) to refer to Roma people who live in poor circumstances, for example using tents as houses and not wearing shoes. In everyday life, the term 'Yiftos' and other words such as 'Yiftia' are often used by non-Roma to insult other non-Roma who display certain unpopular behaviours (e.g. untidy or stingy).

However, recent Greek circulars (2008)⁴ have started to use the term Roma to refer to the Roma population in Greece. Most European countries have also adopted the name 'Roma' or 'Roma and Sinti' for use in official contexts (Bakker et al., 2000). Although the word Roma must have been the original name for all European Gypsies, not all of them call themselves Roma today; some groups call themselves Kalo, Manuš,

³ This word is similar to others used in many countries, such as *Tsigane* in France, *Cigano* in Portugal, *Cigán* in Czech and other Slavic languages when outsiders talk about Roma. Bakker et al. (2000) explain the two theories on the origin of this name: a) it may be derived from the Kurdish (Iranian) word *asingar* which means blacksmith - an occupation of men in many Roma groups and b) it may be derived from the term *athingani*, a word used to describe people who were considered heretics by the Orthodox church in south-eastern Europe.

⁴ An indicative example is the following circular: Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Ministerial Circular (Αριθ. Πρωτ. 11684/Γ1/10.9.2008) 'Εγγραφή και φοίτηση Ρομά' [Roma's school enrolment and attendance].

Romano, Romanichal or Sinti (Bakker et al., 2000). “Even though not all speakers of Romani would call themselves Roma, virtually all call their language Romanes ... or used to do so in earlier documented periods” (Bakker et al., 2000, p. 29). The lack of an agreed term for the Roma reflects one essential characteristic of the Roma globally: their separation in small groups and subgroups which differ from each other (Terzopoulou & Georgiou, 1996).

In my research, I use the term Roma to refer to the group that is mostly called ‘Tsigganoi’ in Greece in everyday life. I have chosen this term as the most accepted common name and thus the most understandable at a European or international level. Concurrently, it is consistent with the term used in recent Greek circulars. Although in the Greek context, I would use the word ‘Rom’ as the singular form and ‘Roma’ as the plural form, in this thesis, I have decided to use the word ‘Roma’ for both the above cases in order to be consistent with the international literature. Similarly, I used the term Romaness (and not Romness for example). However, in this study, I use the term Gypsy when the terms ‘Yiftos’ or ‘Tsigganos’ are used by some participants who disapproved of the use of the term ‘Roma’.

1.5. Overview of the Thesis

This first chapter introduces my thesis. It sets out the key aim and the research questions of my doctoral study and also provides an overview of the thesis’ content.

The second chapter contextualises the situation of the Roma in Greece. It describes aspects of Roma’s living conditions, cultural references and the social inequalities they frequently confront. It focuses on the formal education of Roma children in Greece, reviewing some relevant educational approaches and policies and critically considering the current educational provision where Roma pupils still experience marginalisation.

The third chapter outlines the two major theoretical resources of my thesis. First, I discuss Fraser's economic, cultural and associational dimensions of social justice which inform my study in relation to my participants' views and experiences of success as well as their recommendations concerning how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece. Second, I explore the Bourdieusian concepts of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* and their interplay in relation to my research topic. These Bourdieusian concepts served as the key analytical tools to theorise how my participants account for their educational success.

In the fourth chapter, I justify the choice I made in my study to consider entrance to higher education as a proxy for educational success. However, the main purpose of this chapter is to review and problematise the notion of 'educational success', by reviewing the range of ways it has been conceptualised both in the academic and more popular literature. In this chapter, I also unpack the basic factors which have been identified in the literature as contributing to educational success. I refer to the context-specific meaning of educational success as well as some objective and subjective elements which are frequently attributed to the concept.

The fifth chapter details the methodology and research process I employed in my empirical study. After providing a theoretical account of my qualitative approach to the topic, I discuss issues of access to my participants and some of the associated problems, issues regarding the in-depth interviews I conducted and the coding and analysis process as well as ethical considerations. Finally in this chapter, I reflect on my role as researcher and my position within the research.

Chapter six examines the key factors that my participants believe account for their educational success. Influences of family/home, school, community, locality issues and individual and circumstantial factors on educational success are the key themes discussed. In exploring these themes, I address the first research question investigated in this thesis. These themes are analysed using Bourdieusan concepts of capital, habitus and field.

Chapter seven examines my participants' conceptualisations and experiences of educational success, their experiences of being 'othered' and the role gender plays in Roma's educational success. In the process of exploring these three themes, this chapter addresses my second research question. The findings are analysed in relation to the literature on educational success explored in Chapter 4.

Chapter eight presents my participants' suggestions about what actions need to be taken so that more Roma pupils can succeed in education. My participants' suggestions are various and sometimes contradictory. By exploring and discussing the main suggestions they made, chapter 8 addresses my third research question on how educational provision for Roma students in Greece can be improved, according to my participants' accounts. My participants' suggestions are analysed using Fraser's social justice concepts.

The final chapter summarises the main findings of the thesis. It critically considers some of the limitations of the study, identifies areas for further research, raises the key implications of the study for policy and practice and calls for more attempts to enhance the educational progression of Greek Roma.

Chapter 2. Contextualising the Roma and their Education in Greece

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews some key studies and debates concerning the Roma in Greece in order to contextualise my research. In the first part of the chapter, I describe the Roma community in Greece and consider aspects of Roma's living conditions, cultural background and the social and educational inequalities they experience in their daily lives. In the second part, I concentrate on the current Greek educational context, reviewing the educational approaches that have been attempted in Greece and I outline the current educational provision for Roma children.

2.2. The Roma Community in Greece: A Brief Overview

The Roma have lived in Greece for about one thousand years (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). The Roma populations are believed to originate from commercial-nomadic emigrants who left the Indian sub-continent at the end of the first millennium AD (Acton, Marselos & Szego, 2000). Chatzissavidis (2007) states that the first historical evidence of Roma presence in Greek areas comes from a book 'Βίος του Αγίου Γεωργίου του Αθωνίτη' on the life of Saint George the Athonitis, written in 1068 AD on Mount Athos, where *Adsincani* are presented as villains and descendants of Simon the magician. Roma's legal status, to which I turn below, combined with their under-registration with the civil authorities results in there being little available data about the Roma community in Greece (Dragonas, 2012). Nikolaou (2009) argues that approximately 230,000 Roma live in Greece, while, according to Triantafyllidou (2012), there are 300-350,000 Roma in Greece (about 3% of the total population).

Particular characteristics which are dominant in the traditional Roma lifestyle and culture seem to be preserved by most Roma in

Greece (Chatzisavvidis, 2007).⁵ The community language of the Roma is Romani - a spoken language, which scholars believe is derived from Sanskrit (O'Hanlon and Holmes, 2004) and is probably linked to Hindi and Punjabi (Lander, 2011). There are dialects in the Romani language but according to Bakker et al. (2000, p. 69) "to a certain extent all Roma people understand one another".⁶ In Greece, the Roma mainly speak the Erli and Arli dialects (Bakker et al., 2000).

The overwhelming majority of the Roma in Greece are not considered to be Travellers as they usually have permanent residences. Markou (2008) asserts that about 70% (a continually increasing percentage) of the Roma live in permanent residences; about 22% live permanently in camps set up by Roma after occupying land in the city limits; 5% divide their time between two different regions and only 3% travel. However, he points out that living conditions, even for those permanently settled, are often very poor and in camps they are often unhealthy, due to lack of infrastructure (electricity, water, sanitation). In addition, according to the Panhellenic Network of Municipalities for the support of Greek Roma [Πανελλαδικό Διαδημοτικό Δίκτυο για την υποστήριξη των Ελλήνων Τσιγγάνων] in 2000 (cited in Markou, 2008), only those Roma permanently installed in homes have access to modern means of living. According to Hatzinikolaou and Mitakidou (2005), a lack of housing often leads to school dropouts or school failure and the eventual social exclusion of many Roma children.

The Roma who permanently reside in Greece have Greek nationality, are normally registered in the municipal rolls where they live and have the same rights and obligations as all Greek citizens. The identity of Greek citizen was given to the Roma by the Greek government in 1978 with the document 69468/212/20.10.78 Γ.Δ. edited by the Ministry

⁵ Usually, the Roma in Greece are recognised as Roma because of their physical features, such as their darker complexion (Triantafyllidou, 2012).

⁶ Nevertheless, in some cases, understanding can be limited as the language has changed in different directions in different areas (Bakker et al., 2000). This could be explained by the argument that Romani is often cited as "a recipient language for borrowings" (Matras, 2002, p. 249).

of Interior Affairs with the title ‘Τακτοποίηση από απόψεως ιθαγενείας των διαβιούντων στη χώρα μας Αθιγγάνων’ [‘Arrangement of the nationality issue concerning the Roma/Gypsies who live in our country’] and a year later with the document 16701/12.3.1979 Γ.Δ. ‘Περί της εγγραφής των αδήλωτων Αθιγγάνων’ [‘Regarding the registration of the unregistered Roma/Gypsies’] (Moucheli, 1996). As noted above, in Greece, the Roma are not officially considered to be a minority or an ethnic group. The Greek State does not recognise ethnic categories, despite the fact that European institutions, such as the Council of Europe, recognise the Roma as a group with minority⁷ status (Gotovos, 2002).⁸ The Muslim minority in Thrace is the only officially recognised minority in Greece under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), and is recognised on the basis of religious *diversity* and not on ethnicity (Giakoumaki, 2007). At this point, it should be noted that there are some Muslim Roma in Greece. I discuss some issues related to the Muslim Roma and generally the Muslims and their education in Greece in Section 2.2.1.

The Roma are widely considered as uneducated.⁹ Kostadinova (2011) cites a recent study led by Spain’s Fundacion Secretariado Gitano in 2009 which revealed that Roma literacy and educational levels are much lower than those of the rest of the population in older EU member states, with 83% of Greek Roma being presented as having no education at all. Concurrently, the Roma, everywhere, are widely considered to undervalue education. In some cases, researchers seem to understand

⁷ Tsitselikis and Christopoulos (1997) point out that to identify a minority, according to different definitions proposed in the International Law of minorities, the members of the group under study should be citizens of the state, be a minority among the ‘indigenous’ population, be characterised by national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious features different from those of the majority, be disadvantaged because of the expression of these characteristics from social, economic, political or legal terms, express a collective willingness to preserve their specific identity and assert political and legal rights for their specificity.

⁸ France, Greece, Turkey, Belgium, Iceland, Luxembourg, Andorra and Monaco do not apply the concept of minority to their Roma populations (Kostadinova, 2011).

⁹ Okely (1983) makes a distinction between Roma’s ‘schooling’ and ‘education’. She argues that frequently Roma children are not being ‘schooled’ but they get ‘educated’ inside their traditional family system (e.g. they get grounded knowledge regarding the identification of different scrap metals).

Roma's educational disadvantage as linked with Roma culture: formal schooling is seen as in tension with traditional family-based learning in the Roma community (Lee & Warren, 1991; Smith, 1997; Levinson, 2008). Kyuchukov (2000, p. 274) calls formal schooling "a non-Roma world" where school knowledge is different from the one transmitted through the Roma community in the traditional way. In contrast, Mitakidou and Tressou (2007) reject arguments of this type as untrue for the Roma in Greece. They explain that, through these claims, Roma students' non attendance and school dropout are presented as a conscious choice made by the Roma in order to avoid their assimilation into the dominant non-Roma culture. Magka and Mpempe (2007), Roma women who are active in the Panhellenic Cultural Educational Creative Female Roma Association (Πανελλήνιος Εκπολιτιστικός Μορφωτικός Δημιουργικός Γυναικείος Σύλλογος Ρομ Δενδροποτάμου) in Dendropotamos (Thessaloniki), strongly assert that education will enable Roma children to escape poverty and social exclusion and they call on teachers to help their dream come true. The problem, as they see it, is exclusion and not a 'choice' (by the Roma) not to participate in schooling.

According to the Report on the Peer Review Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2009),¹⁰ among school age children, it appears that non-attendance is a phenomenon that has progressively decreased from generation to generation. Nevertheless, rates of Roma participation in education still do not appear sufficient to enhance and improve the vocational mobility and status of Roma (ibid).

According to this Report, the Roma are underrepresented in jobs corresponding to higher educational levels (professional, administrative, specialised technical vocations) (Peer Review Report, 2009). At the same

¹⁰ European Commission (2009). *The Greek Roma issue: Spatial and social exclusion and integration policies (Peer Review Integrated Programme for the Social Inclusion of Roma) (Host Country Report)* (2009). Retrieved May 5, 2012 from www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu. In this thesis, I refer to this report as Peer Review Report (2009).

time, few Roma hold jobs which require elementary professional training, such as employees in the service provision sectors, waiters, hairdressers, salespersons at stores and car mechanics (Peer Review Report, 2009). Nevertheless, the market 'provides' a role for the Roma in certain occupations, such as recycling work, itinerant trade and junk dealing, which are practised almost exclusively by Roma people. In other unskilled occupations, such as land work, the percentage of Roma workers is also significant (Peer Review Report, 2009).

Trading (of clothing, fruit and vegetables, electronics) now forms the main economic activity of the Roma (Markou, 2008). Because of the modernisation of the Greek economy and mass production and consumption, the Roma have abandoned their traditional occupations, such as making and repairing chairs or baskets, copper art and working as blacksmiths (Markou, 2008). The only traditional Roma occupation that is evident today is the music industry (ibid). The income of Roma, in most cases, is not steady, as it mainly depends on their employment, which is seasonal. In general terms, Roma income is low and, as a result, the overwhelming majority of households have an income that is below the poverty line in Greece (Peer Review Report, 2009). Most Roma are not insured (Labridis, 2004), which means that they do not have access to medical treatment in Greece, and low life expectancy and high infant and child mortality reflect their poor health levels (Peer Review Report, 2009; Triantafyllidou, 2012).

The Roma in Greece frequently practice traditional customs and follow different practices compared to the dominant Greek community. For example, fewer than half of the men who should serve in the army enlist for their military service (Peer Review Report, 2009). In many cases, the Roma express different ideas concerning gender roles, reflected in the dominance of a patriarchal family structure (Chatzisavvidis, 2007), and they often get married under age (Triantafyllidou, 2012) and have many children. According to Vaxevanoglou (2001, p. 149):

Roma children become adolescents early by having many responsibilities; Roma adolescents become adults early by creating their own family; Roma adults become grandparents before their 40s.

Collectivity is a significant value in the Roma community (Lidaki, 1997). Roma relationships tend to be regulated by customary law – and not the state law (Lidaki, 1997). Chatzissavidis (2007) notes that in Greece, most Roma are Orthodox Christians, although about 20% of the Roma in Greece are Muslims, who live mainly in Thrace, and a very small percentage of the Roma follow the Pentecostal Church. It should be noted that many aspects of the traditional Roma culture and lifestyle seem to be similar to those experienced by the poorest groups of Greeks some decades ago. Vaxevanoglou (2001) makes the same claim for the Roma family structure.

The aspects described above are general aspects that can be said to characterise the Roma in Greece, but not all of them to the same degree, because the Roma in Greece are not a homogeneous group (Markou, 2008; Nikolaou, 2009). The heterogeneity of the Roma in Greece is recognised in terms of language, religion, lifestyle, social and economic status and finally degree of their acceptance from the dominant society (Trubeta, 2008). For example, when Markou (2008) described Roma's housing and living conditions, he noted some considerable differences among different areas. In particular, in some regions, such as in Agia Varvara (in Athens), Kato Achaia (near Patras), Kordelio and Dendropotamos (in Thessaloniki), the Roma, in general, live in good conditions while in other regions, such as Aspropyrgos, Metaxourgeio and Zefyri (regions in Athens) the opposite is true (Markou, 2008). Zachos (2011) uses the term 'Roma groups' to avoid homogenisation. And, although for the Roma, the use of *Romani* is a powerful indication of cohesive identity and belonging to their community (Nikolaou, 2009), according to Labridis (2004), many Roma come from small groups which differ from each other in aspects such as the area of origin, the language spoken, the values adopted. All these result in their identifying themselves in different ways; in some rare cases, "some Roma cannot

even communicate with other Roma in Greece because of the varieties of the spoken language” (Labridis, 2004, p. 31).

To sum up, in Greece there are many differences between the Roma; some aspects of traditional culture and lifestyle are dominant for some Roma and less so for others. It makes sense to suggest that some Roma probably experience less, or less obvious, inequalities in their lives compared to other Roma. However, all the Roma, regardless of the differences among the community, often experience wide-spread prejudice and discrimination in Greece (Dragonas, 2012). This fact is eloquently expressed by Lidaki (1997) who states that whatever success the Roma achieve, they are always considered as Gypsies by the non-Roma.

2.2.1. The Muslim Roma in Greece

The Muslim minority of Western Thrace - the only officially recognised minority in Greece (Askouni, 2006) - is regarded as an indigenous religious minority; its origins can be traced back to the Ottoman conquest of the region of Thrace (Lytra, 2007).¹¹ The Muslims in Western Thrace are Greek citizens (Askouni, 2006) and, although the situation is more complex in reality, broadly the Muslim minority can be said to consist of three groups: a) the minority Turks; b) the Pomaks (originally Slavophone); and c) the Roma¹² (Trubeta, 2001). Although

¹¹ According to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty (the international treaty signed by Greece and Turkey after the defeat of the Greek army by the Turkish forces in 1922 in Asia Minor/Anatolia, Turkey) there was a compulsory population exchange: Christians who used to live in present Turkey had to move to Greece and Muslims who used to live in Greece had to move to Turkey. However, the Muslim population of Western Thrace as well as the Greek population of Istanbul (and some other regions) had been treated as exceptions and were exempted. The 1923 Lausanne Treaty “recognises, regulates and protects the present legal status as well as the linguistic, cultural, educational and religious rights of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace” (Lytra, 2007, p. 42). According to Lytra (2007), the minority population of Western Thrace is estimated at 80,000 to 90,000 people.

¹² Lytra (2007) cites Embeirikos et al. (2001) and Zegginis’ argument (1994) that the minority Turkish-speaking residents of Gazi (Athens) (where one participant comes from) are officially identified as ‘Mousoulmanoi Tsigganoi/Muslim Roma/Gypsies’ and number somewhere around 2,500-3,000. However, in Lytra’s (2007) study, none of the minority members identified themselves using the official term ‘Mousoulmanoi Tsigganoi/Muslim Roma/Gypsies’ and “only one person openly admitted that he and

these Roma people frequently describe themselves as minority Turks, they are seen as Roma not only by the (non-minority) Greeks but also by the minority Turks (Trubeta, 2001). Turkish has developed as the lingua franca of the minority (Lytra, 2007).

The Muslim minority experience social marginalisation and the educational level of its members has been low for many years (Askouni, 2006). However, the situation is improving and schooling for Muslim children is expanding.¹³ Education is provided in bilingual minority schools (with half of the classes taught in Greek and half in Turkish) which run under a special legal framework. Families can choose whether to attend public mainstream schools or minority ones. Minority schools mainly function at the primary education level. As far as secondary education is concerned, there are two minority high schools and two religious Islamic Schools (Madrasas).¹⁴ 75% of minority students attend mainstream public high schools.

Since 1995, affirmative action measures have been put in place to enable more Muslim students to enter higher education (an extra 0.5% of the places offered by each university department is given to Muslim students) (Askouni, 2006). Mitsis (2009) suggests that the Greek State should apply similar policies to enable more Roma students to access higher education and concurrently should introduce policies to increase their rates of employment in public services.

As far as the Muslim Roma are concerned, this group of students is the most affected by the educational disadvantage reported for the

other residents of Gazi are in fact Tsigganoi 'Roma/Gypsies' (Lytra, 2007, p. 44). Similarly, Antoniou (2005) talks of his experience in Gazi explaining that those labelled "Muslim Roma" by the Greek state identified themselves as "Turks". However, on several occasions, he was told by "Pomak" and "Turkish" informants in Thrace and Athens that the residents of Gazi are "Gypsies" and not "Turks".

¹³ Data accessed through the site of the Programme for the Education of the Muslim minority children in Thrace: addition, not subtraction; multiplication, not division. 'Education in numbers'.

¹⁴ Data accessed through the site of the Programme for the Education of the Muslim minority children in Thrace: addition, not subtraction; multiplication, not division. 'The education of the minority'.

Muslim minority. However, Muslim Roma students (can) have access to any interventions directed towards minority students or Roma students. While my study includes two participants of Muslim Roma background, my intention in this thesis is not to focus on the differences between Muslim Roma and non-Muslim Roma students.

2.3. The Exclusion of Roma in Greece at a Social Level

In Greece, the Roma experience social exclusion (Exarchos, 1998; Chrysakis, 2004; Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012) despite an inclusive discourse concerning diversity which predominates at a theoretical level and in government policy, as detailed in Section 2.5.1. Mousourou (1998) explains exclusion as a situation identified by a) a lack of individual and social rights that the particular society considers basic, b) a lack of entry into employment and enjoyment of social and public goods and c) a lack of participation in exercising power. Tsiakalos (1998) describes social exclusion as a process of marginalisation that leads to economic impoverishment and to various forms of social and cultural inferiority. Robolis and Dimoulas (1998) point out that people who experience social exclusion are unable to exercise their social, cultural and political rights, which are consistent with a modern concept of citizenship. More specifically, according to Jary and Jary (2000, p. 568), social exclusion is:

a form of social disadvantage encompassing economic and non-economic factors ... Excluded individuals and groups are separated from institutions and wider society, and consequently from both rights and duties e.g. the political, educational and civic.

In Greece, the majority of the Roma are poor, highly marginalised and frequently live in extreme conditions at the edges of urban areas (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). They are often treated in a pejorative way by non-Roma in their daily life (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). According to the European Roma Rights Centre (2003) (cited in Themelis, 2009c), in Greece, many Roma groups on the outskirts of Athens and elsewhere face residential segregation and sometimes systematic expulsion from their camps.

The Roma confront many problems in their daily living conditions, employment and education (Nikolaou, 2009). Drydakís (2012) states that there is a wage gap between Roma and non-Roma female workers which is explained by prejudices against Roma women regardless of their educational attainment and job status. Nikolaou (2009) points out that the segregation of Roma pupils and their parents in school and social life continues to exist, accompanied by mutual suspicion and sometimes hostility. Classmates are often hostile towards their Roma classmates, accusing them of lack of hygiene, interest and motivation (Nikolaou, 2009). At the level of relationships, non-Roma people in Greece usually doubt Roma's good intentions; they consider having relationships with the Roma as non acceptable and they are usually negative towards the idea of living in the same area as Roma people (Labridis, 2004).

A stereotypical image of the Roma is frequently presented in the Greek Media which, in the main, represent the Roma in a negative way (Labridis, 2004). Karpozilos (2004) explores how Greek newspapers reproduce stereotypes of Roma people through articles concerning Roma's relationships with the state. He points out that in many publications, the issues of Roma housing and health are predominant. Sometimes violence from the police against the Roma is reported and it is stated that police officers and judges are often suspicious of the Roma even in cases where the latter are innocent (Karpozilos, 2004). Karpozilos (2004) argues that, in general, the newspapers contribute to the development and reproduction of the dipole of defining the 'us and the others' and this context produces a certain 'Roma type'.¹⁵

¹⁵ The media in Greece show an interest towards issues of life and education of the Roma people. An indicative example is the programme *Πρωταγωνιστές: Ο Διωγμός των Τσιγγάνων* [*Protagonistes: The Prosecution of the Roma*] by Stavros Theodorakis which was on air (Mega Channel) on 10/10/2010 to mark the 66 years after 10/10/1944, when Hitler ordered 800 children of Gypsy origin to be killed in Auschwitz. 'Protagonistes' presented the current difficult conditions of living for Roma people in Sofo Aspropyrgou (near Athens) highlighting Roma children's attendance at the 12th Primary School of Aspropyrgos. Moreover, some years ago (period 1997-1998, Mega Channel), one of the most popular television series in Greece, «Ψίθυροι καρδιάς» [Heart's whispers], with viewing rates reaching 76.7%, presented the love relationship between a representative of the Greek state and a young Roma woman in a gypsy camp. The story end implied that the young couple would overcome prejudice and would stay together.

In this context, it is unsurprising that Roma children experience inequalities in their education to which I now turn.

2.4. The Educational Exclusion of Roma

The exclusion of the Roma at a social level is also reflected in educational settings. In this section, I examine some Greek sources in order to highlight the inequalities and exclusionary practices which pattern Roma's education in Greece before I turn to the nature of current educational provision for the Roma community.

Vergidis (1995a) has argued that the social exclusion experienced by the Roma is a form of what he calls 'neo-racism'. Gillborn (2008, p. 3) argues that "traditionally, racism has often been viewed as involving two key characteristics: a belief in the existence of discrete human races and the idea that those 'races' are hierarchically ordered". However, Vergidis (1995a) states that these views are rarely espoused directly in mainstream politics or educational discussions. When Vergidis cites neo-racist practices against the Roma in Greece, he draws on Balibar's construction:

The new racism is a racism of the era of 'decolonization', of the reversal of population movements between the old colonies and the old metropolises, and the division of humanity within a single political space. Ideologically, current racism, which in France centres upon the immigration complex, fits into a framework of 'racism without races' which is already widely developed in other countries, particularly the Anglo-Saxon ones. It is a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or people in relation to others but only the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions; in short it is what P.A. Taguieff has rightly called a *differentialist racism* (Balibar, 2007, p. 84).

Based on Balibar's view, Vergidis (1995a) notes that the core of neo-racism is cultural difference - not biology. He argues that neo-racist school practices against Roma students can be characterised as taking two main forms: first, the *active* exclusion of Roma children from schools,

either because of protests from local society, or through administrative ways; second, the *passive* exclusion of Roma children in the classroom through marginalisation or mere tolerance of their presence.

The low income and traditional occupations of Roma and the social inequalities they experience have been reported as the major factors leading to the exclusion of Roma children from school (Vergidis, 1998). Chatzissavidis (2007) has constructed a typology of eight main ways in which the exclusion of Roma children in Greek schools is produced. The first factor is the hostile attitudes of teachers and classmates who usually do not accept Roma children because of stereotypes existing in Greece about the Roma (Chatzissavidis, 2007). The curriculum is a second factor in Roma's school exclusion because the subjects taught develop skills that are not useful for Roma traditional ways of living and occupations (*ibid*). Third, the community language spoken by the Roma is different than the language used in school (Chatzissavidis, 2007). Fourth, Roma children's attendance at school is sometimes erratic, because the children support their families through working with them (*ibid*). Fifth, many Roma families travel and in many cases Roma children are not registered at new schools (*ibid*).

Sixth, there is no special training for those teachers teaching Roma students (Chatzisavvidis, 2007; Mavrommatis, 2008). As a result, in the best cases, teachers treat Roma students as non-Roma (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). Mitsis (2009) recognises that an additional difficulty for Roma education is that some teachers are unaware of issues relevant to the community. Thus, the need for teacher training with intercultural dimensions in the Greek context is emphasised (Paleologou, 2004).¹⁶ Seventh, Chatzissavidis (2007) argues that, for many older Roma, the knowledge of writing, reading and arithmetic is believed to be sufficient for their children's needs. Finally, he refers to the traditional Roma lifestyle and cultural traditions; "school success is considered as a

¹⁶ According to Georgiadis and Zisimos (2012), the Teacher-IN-Service-Training-for-Roma-inclusion programme is a transnational educational programme of teachers' good training practice in Europe.

step of leaving the Roma way of living and getting closer to non-Roma” (Chatzissavidis, 2007, p. 57). The pattern of getting married and having children at a young age (average 15-16 years old) is an additional factor in school dropout rates (Chatzissavidis, 2007).

In presenting Chatzisavvidis’ list of ways in which the Roma are excluded in and from school, I do not want to imply that Roma children should learn traditional skills, have access to a different curriculum or attend different classes. I just want to highlight that, although teaching the same curriculum to Roma children in the mainstream school reflects an attempt at inclusion, this access to the same curriculum, school and every educational aspect offered to all children is not necessarily effective for Roma children.¹⁷

Vergidis’ (1997) research study in Kato Achaia¹⁸ on Roma inclusion in Greek schools is significant in this discussion on educational exclusion in Greece. In 1993-94, in ‘Tsigganika’, two literacy classes were organised, that 43 Roma children attended. These classes were complementary to the primary school and tried to compensate for the difficulties that Roma children faced in entering the formal education system, and for the school’s failure to reduce Roma children’s school dropout rates (Vergidis, 1997). 90 lessons took place (ibid). Compared with the attendance of the same Roma children at the first class of their primary school, attendance at both literacy classes was more regular (ibid). Within this literacy programme developed for Roma children, different teaching materials were produced. The General Secretariat for Adult Education, supported by UNESCO, funded these literacy programmes and simultaneously undertook a study of the conditions

¹⁷ These approaches appear to be an official effort to respond to theoretical inclusive demands rather than to prevent Roma’s school marginalisation or exclusion.

¹⁸ Kato Achaia is a semi-urban region with about 5,500 residents (county of Achaia, Peloponnese, 23 km from the city of Patras). It is estimated that 30% of its residents are Roma, mostly permanently settled in their own area called ‘Tsigganika’. These Roma work in trade and they are relatively wealthy. Outside Kato Achaia, there are some Roma nomads with low incomes who live under less favourable conditions (Vergidis, 1997).

necessary for Roma school inclusion and the assessment of the programme at a local level, with an emphasis on the assessment of teaching materials and teaching practices (Vergidis, 1995b).

Vergidis (1998) focused on school enrollments, school dropout, the regularity of attendance, and the Roma children's performance in courses and their participation in institutionalised and informal activities at school, in order to determine the degree of school inclusion of Roma children. The examination of these indices showed that: Roma children's performance was of a lower standard compared to other children and they tended to leave school at an earlier level. Roma children experienced forms of marginalisation within the school institution; in contrast to the poorer Roma children, the wealthier ones entered primary school and attended regularly; and teachers explained Roma children's failure at school in terms of 'deficits', such as their family environment, although usually Roma cultural lives were not taken into consideration in the organisation of school life and teaching.

According to the data collected in the primary school in Kato Achaia during the years 1990/91 – 1994/95, about 50 Roma children attended school regularly (Vergidis, 1995a). The increase of Roma registrations at primary school from 1990-91 and 1992-93 was not only due to the permanent living arrangements of families and their relatively higher incomes, but was also due to the positive climate which was developed in the local community through this broad literacy intervention. The team worked in three directions (Vergidis, 1995a). First, they made the local public community aware of issues related to the Roma and started a public dialogue through the local newspaper. Second, cooperation between municipal and school authorities was facilitated in order to solve any problems posed by the coexistence of the two communities, 'native' Greek non-Roma and Greek Roma. Third, cooperation was encouraged with the Roma local cultural association 'Panagitsa' which had over 300 members.

Vergidis (1997) notes that Roma children's absences from school were related not only to factors outside the school setting but also to events and practices inside the educational institutions. Some schools behaved as if there were no Roma children in the classroom, while at the same time ignoring the fact that the Roma native language was not Greek. In addition, sometimes it was forgotten that many Roma parents might not have had a formal education and so might have been less able to support their children's progress or help them with their lessons in Greek mainstream schools (Vergidis, 1997).

On the basis of this research, Vergidis (1997) claimed that the way that many mainstream schools work leads to Roma children's school dropout. When an educational institution takes into account Roma children's heritage, culture and lifestyle, the results, according to Vergidis (1997), are positive. Based on his 15 years of experience as a teacher at schools that Roma students attend, Hatzinikolaou (2007) points out that when the teacher is aware of the Roma students' social world, closer relationships are created between the school and the community which potentially benefit Roma children's school inclusion. However, even today, practices of active school exclusion for the Roma from the school still take place. An indicative example was presented in the Introduction (Section 1.1.) regarding the Roma students in Aspropyrgos (Athens). This is also illustrated by a document that, according to some Greek educational websites, in September 2012, the Greek Ministry of Education sent to the Directors of Primary Education (of each county) asking them to report those heads who do not register Roma students at their primary schools (esos, 2012).¹⁹

According to the Study on combating school dropouts (2007),²⁰ many Roma children drop out in order to support their families'

¹⁹ This post was accessed through the Greek educational website esos.gr. I refer to this post as (esos, 2012).

²⁰ At this point, I refer to the following source: Ministry of Education (2007). *Μελέτη για την καταπολέμηση της σχολικής διαρροής, Παραδοτέο 2: Ανάλυση των μετρήσεων της σχολικής διαρροής και καταγραφή υπαρχόντων συστημάτων, απόψεων & προτάσεων καταπολέμησής της* [Study on combating school drop-out, Essay 2: Analysis of

occupational activities. Roma girls are more likely than Roma boys to leave school early because of household chores and their early marriages, despite their willingness to continue at school. According to this study, there seems to be a positive correlation between a student's self-esteem and his/her school progress. It is stated that in some cases, some students' drop-out is expected and that is the reason why both the students' family and the school community invest less in these students' education. Furthermore, the study claims that the mother's role is crucial to her children's school progress and that mothers put more pressure on their boys than on their girls to continue with their schooling.

To sum up, although in Greece inclusive and intercultural practices are promoted at a policy level, Roma children still experience educational inequalities in many cases.

2.5. The Education of Roma in Greece: Theoretical Perspectives and Current Provision

2.5.1. Intercultural and Inclusive Approaches

Today, in Greece, Roma's education and many relevant interventions are approached from the perspective of intercultural education. The term 'intercultural education' first appeared in Greek literature in the late 1980's and was associated with the integration of repatriated Greek pupils²¹ in schools and the wider social setting

measurements of school drop-out and record of existing systems, opinions and suggestions for the control of school drop-out]. Athens: Planet.

²¹ The term 'repatriated' refers to Greeks who have returned to Greece after having lived abroad for many years or to people of Greek origin who have 'migrated' to Greece. In addition to people of Greek descent who have come back to Greece, the multiculturalism of Greek society is marked by the existence of other groups such as foreign workers, Roma and the Muslim minority of Thrace (Markou, 1993). The term 'foreigner' refers to people who have been in Greece as immigrants from foreign countries. According to Palaiologou and Faas (2012), 150,000 co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union (Pontic Greeks) and nearly 240,000 ethnic Greek Albanians from southern Albania (Vorioepiotes) arrived in Greece in the late 1980s and during the 1990s. Moreover, during the 1990s and 2000s, Greece received migrants from eastern European, Asian and African countries. In total, the legal immigrant population, mainly including Albanians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Georgians, Ukrainians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis, was around 700,000.

(Markou, 1995).²² Before the 1980s, a homogenous ethnic tradition was predominant in Greece (Giakoumaki, 2007) - the Muslim minority in Thrace was the only exception. This homogeneity was “built upon the elements of religion (Greek-Orthodox), language (Greek), national consciousness (Greek) and an ambiguous conceptualisation of ‘Greek descent’” (Tsitselikis, 2006, p. 145). Thus, the Roma in Greece are marginalised in linguistic (Romani) and ethnic/national terms (Tsitselikis, 2006). The Greek state attempted measures with an emphasis on language (Markou, 1993), such as preparatory classes focusing on Greek, in order to address repatriated students’ educational needs.

Interest by the Greek state in Roma education was first expressed in 1981, when efforts were made to expand the programmes of the General Secretariat for Adult Education (Γενική Γραμματεία Λαϊκής Επιμόρφωσης) to Roma adults (Mavrommatis, 2008). The first Special Centres for Adult Education (Ειδικά Κέντρα Λαϊκής Επιμόρφωσης) were founded in 1983 and provided the first programme for the Roma, which targeted the Roma in Agia Varvara (Athens) and Kato Achaia (near Patras). In 1987, the Ministry of Education requested the General Secretariat for Adult Education to make educational provision for Roma of school age as well (Mavrommatis, 2008). According to Gotovos (2002), Roma were considered different from the dominant group in a linguistic and cultural sense.

After 1996, in Greece, significant efforts were made to address the issue of education for immigrants’ children, efforts which also included the Roma and the Muslim minority in Western Thrace (Nikolaou, 2005). Intercultural education in Greece was officially established by the Law 2413/1996, JO A124 ‘Η ελληνική παιδεία στο εξωτερικό, η

²² Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2011) distinguish between the Greek terms ‘intercultural’ (διαπολιτισμική-*diapolitismiki*) and ‘multicultural’ (πολυπολιτισμική-*polypolitismiki*). They explain that in Greek academic discourse, the term ‘intercultural education’ is considered as a normative concept which prescribes a desired state of affairs and a prescriptive approach to the goals of education. In contrast, ‘multicultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’ are seen as descriptive terms which, without evaluative connotations, refer to a state of affairs, notably the coexistence of different cultures and ethnic or national groups within one society (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011).

διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση και άλλες διατάξεις' [Greek education abroad, intercultural education and other directives]. According to this law (p. 41), the aim of intercultural education was the organisation and operation of primary schools and secondary schools in order to provide education to young people with educational, social, cultural or educational differences and special curricula with additional or alternative courses were to be applied. This legalisation of intercultural education represented a shift from earlier approaches based on a 'deficit hypothesis' towards the recognition of 'cultural distinctiveness' and the 'difference hypothesis', which meant that policymakers would now recognise cultural and ethnic differences in Greece (Damanakis 2005).

Giakoumaki (2007) explains the adoption of an intercultural approach in Greek education as based on the fact that responding to diversity has become a priority in the European agenda and European institutions, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. She argues that practices have been adopted in Greek educational policy, consistent with modern policies for diversity management, to ensure a politically correct image of Greece in a European and international context. Examples of this policy approach in Greece are the Law 2413/96 concerning Intercultural Education; research programmes concerning Muslim children's education in Thrace since 1997; and the decision of the Ministry of Education (in 2005) to create educational materials for Jewish history for the first time in Greek schools (Giakoumaki, 2007).

Despite the discourse of Intercultural theory and practices, in many cases the dipole 'we and the others' is predominant, raising questions about the success of this approach – as it is still presented and implemented - both in theory and in practice. In addition, the framework in which different educational practices are implemented is not always clear and concepts such as *intercultural*, *integration*, *inclusion* tend to be used interchangeably or sometimes in a complementary way - such as *intercultural inclusion* in Parthenis work (Parthenis, 2010).

Although in the present thesis, a detailed engagement with terminology is not a priority, a better understanding of the relevant terms is necessary for a deeper comprehension of the relevant policies in the Greek context. Zoniou-Sideri (1998) argues that the difference between the terms *inclusion* (ένταξη – “entaxi”) and *integration* (ενσωμάτωση – “ensomatosi”) is that in the first case, the original key features of the person or group of people remain and become richer through their inclusion; in contrast, in the integration process, these original features disappear after having been assimilated into the characteristics of a larger whole, usually through a process where someone tries to conform to the dominant patterns.

Today, the most prevalent term used in Greek education is *inclusion* (συμπερίληψη-“summerilipsi”). Inclusive education refers to a type of education that includes all students and takes into account their needs and respects their *diversity* (Yfanti & Xenogianni, 2004). Inclusive education focuses on the detailed development of cultures, policies and practices in educational systems, as well as in educational institutions, in order to be able to recognise students’ diversity and treat them respectfully (Angelidis, 2009). Yfanti and Xenogianni (2004) state that inclusive education requires a change in teaching and learning objectives and content, a redefinition of how to assess students and educational results as a whole while increasing the size of the budget for education.

However, Gotovos (2006) states that the term ‘inclusion’ is still general and vague and, as a result, any serious assessment of the current inclusive model and the effectiveness of institutional interventions in Greece is difficult to achieve. Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2011) suggest the need for future research on refining and elaborating what is meant by interculturalism in the Greek context through targeted empirical research. Furthermore, based on their research, they argue that the Greek case reveals that intercultural education policies may be plural in the letter of the law but assimilatory in their daily practice thus reflecting more strongly the dominant understandings of national identity in Greece

than the more general principles of respect for, and recognition of, cultural diversity.

In this section, I have explored the dominant educational approaches concerning diverse populations in Greece with an emphasis on Roma children. My main focus in this thesis is the educational situation of the Roma in Greece to which I now turn.

2.5.2. Mainstream and Separate Schooling

The official policy discourse, where inclusive and intercultural approaches predominate, presents the mainstream school as both desirable and the predominant school for Roma students in Greek education. However, in practice Roma students experience various forms of discrimination, for example, by being educated in separate schools in Roma areas where only Roma students are registered or in separate classes inside the mainstream school (Dragonas, 2012). A detailed account regarding some data I accessed in relation to Roma's schooling is attached in Appendix 1. Varnava-Skoura et al. (2012) report that in some cases (such as in areas with a large Roma population), there are a small number of schools comprising only Roma children. However, Roma representatives in Greece are opposed to separate schooling and are in favour of Roma being educated in mainstream schools as a means of enhancing the integration of Roma within the wider Greek community (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012).²³

The Romani language is not used in any type of schooling, programme or interventions addressing Roma students in Greece (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). However, the benefits of using students' mother tongue in language teaching and learning are reported in the international literature (Cummins, 2008). In particular, flexible bilingual

²³ Hancock (1998) describes some attempts for Roma's separate schooling in America. It seems that according to his rationale, separate schools can be an effective way of schooling Roma in a way that respects Roma traditions, beliefs and practices (e.g. through separate seating of boys and girls and the teaching of Romani).

approaches to language teaching and learning are advocated when teaching bilingual children by means of bilingual instructional strategies, in which two or more languages are used alongside each other (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).²⁴

Palaiologou and Faas (2012) reveal a gap between the Law 2413/96 and its implementation in Greece as the Law allows the teaching of a foreign language to students where there are sufficient numbers of foreign pupils and provides for bilingual teachers in Greece. According to Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2011), the law 2910/2001 provides for the possibility of offering mother-tongue learning in addition to the core curriculum. Paleologou (2004) argues for educational programmes that support mother tongue learning and the development of corresponding instructional material. In the context of the educational intervention entitled 'Education of foreigners and repatriated students [Εκπαίδευση αλλοδαπών και παλιννοστούντων μαθητών]', evening classes promoting the students' mother tongues (mostly Albanian and Russian)²⁵ are offered. In contrast, the Romani language and Roma's home culture are often regarded as obstacles for Roma's schooling in Greece (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). Georgiadis and Zisimos (2012) argue that in Greece, the Roma culture is often seen as inferior and is not recognised within the majority school system, and this probably explains why the Romani language is not treated in the same way as other students' home languages. Mavrommatis (2008) notes that during the implementation of the Programme for the Education of Roma children (initial stages) (for more about the programme see Section 2.5.3.), a (Greek-Romani)

²⁴ On the basis of Cummins' approach, Creese and Blackledge (2010) go beyond the acceptance or tolerance of students' languages, supporting these languages' cultivation and use in teaching and learning.

²⁵ Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. *Εκπαίδευση αλλοδαπών και παλιννοστούντων μαθητών (Programme), 'Μητρική γλώσσα μαθητών' [Education of non-nationals and repatriated students, 'Students' mother tongue']*. Retrieved January 20, 2015 from <http://www.diapolis.auth.gr/index.php/2013-10-17-09-02-51>

dictionary had been planned in order to be used for Roma's schooling. Roma adults who participated in the programme encouraged (the Greek) teachers to use the Romani language in the classroom. However, it seems that these interventions had not been designed in an organised way and it is not known if there were any positive results regarding the use of Romani language (Mavrommatis, 2008).

As far as the separate schooling of Roma is concerned, in the existing Circulars (e.g. Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Ministerial Circular Γ1/694/1.9.99 entitled 'Φοίτηση Τσιγγανοπαίδων' [Roma children's school attendance]), a separate school for Roma children is not regarded as desirable and is provided only in specific cases where there is no other option. In practice, in some cases, separate Roma schools are established near the Roma camps (Dragonas, 2012). These schools are considered to be like other mainstream schools in the national education system. However, the buildings are located near the Roma encampment and only Roma children are registered there. These schools officially follow the same curriculum as the mainstream schools. However, O'Nions (2010) argues that Roma's separate schooling often equates to lower educational standards and a reduced curriculum, which results in the promotion of the view that Roma students are educationally inferior.

Liegeois (1997) refers to these 'separate' schools as *closed* classes, and he distinguishes *normal/mainstream* from *special* classes. Often these schools are seen as a good solution because Roma children would not otherwise attend mainstream schools regularly (Liegeois, 1997). According to Liegeois (1997), this type of school provision promotes the adaptation of Roma to the mainstream school environment. However, he points out that in these schools, Roma are not able to form social connections with the wider society. For this reason, this separate form of schooling for Roma is usually temporary and is sometimes seen as contributing towards the marginalisation of Roma children (Liegeois, 1997). However, these classes have given many Roma children the chance to access school and still do, and they offer Roma parents the opportunity,

often a unique opportunity, to familiarise themselves with a school environment that accepts and respects their children and keeps them safe (ibid). Liegois (1997) claims that separate classes for Roma children are necessary but insufficient; he argues that these schools are a short-term solution, a mediating transition phase, and they appear as a complement to other types of education.

It is difficult to access official data for separate Roma schools in Greece (they are mainly presented as mainstream schools with a high number of Roma students)²⁶. However, it seems that the reason why they get established is in order to address the problems created when the local community does not welcome Roma children in the mainstream schools, as in the Aspropyrgos case which was described by New (2013) in Chapter 1 (Section 1.1.).

There are other types of supportive educational provision which address the whole student population in Greece and include the Roma students (See Appendix 2). In particular, Appendix 2 details the Reception and Tutorial Classes offered in the Educational Priority Zones (emphasis on the acquisition of the Greek language) as well as other supportive tutorials (enishytikh didaskalia/ενισχυτική διδασκαλία; additional teaching support/πρόσθετη διδακτική στήριξη). In the following section, I review the Programme for the Education of Roma children which is currently being implemented in Greece.

2.5.3. The Programme for the Education of Roma Children

In 1996, the Ministry of Education developed three programmes to address the education of students who are excluded from education or are threatened by educational exclusion (Koustouli, & Mitakidou, 2009): the first programme addresses the inclusion of repatriate and immigrant children in primary school; the second programme addresses the education of Muslim students in Thrace (details about the education of

²⁶ Appendix 1 includes some relevant data.

Muslim children were provided in Section 2.2.1.); the third programme addresses the inclusion of Roma students in mainstream schools to which I now turn.²⁷

The University of Ioannina co-ordinated the programme for the education of Roma children from 1997 until 2004, aiming at improving the school attendance of Roma children and their integration into the educational system (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012). It was found that the low educational level of this group was due mainly to the effect of difficult conditions in all areas, especially in housing, health and work (ibid). Furthermore, language differences impeded Roma children's integration (Vergidis, 1998). Kostouli and Mitakidou (2009) argue that Roma children often enter school with a poor command of Greek, as they speak Romani at home.

The programme for Roma students' education has led to some positive results regarding a number of variables including an increase in Roma children's school enrolment, their transition to secondary school and completion of compulsory education (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012). For instance, according to Gotovos (2002, p. 171), "in 1997, only 25% of Roma children aged 6-12 years attended primary school. This percentage had risen to 76% in June 2002". The programme was then co-ordinated by the University of Thessaly aiming to reduce dropout rates and improve school integration (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012). The programme «Εκπαίδευση των παιδιών Ρομά» ["Education of Roma children"] is still being implemented aiming, primarily, at boosting the attendance of Roma at pre-school and compulsory education. It is supervised by Professor Evaggelia Tressou (Department of Elementary Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) for the counties of Macedonia and Thrace and Professor George Markou (Centre for Intercultural Education, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Athens) for the other Greek counties.

²⁷ These three projects for the education of Roma, Muslims and foreign students are implemented under the general title 'Intercultural Education Programmes' (Damanakis, 2005).

Despite the attempts made by these programmes, however, significant problems regarding the education of Roma are still reported (Mitsis, 2009; Nikolaou, 2009; Dragonas, 2012). For instance, Farkas (2014) cites the survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency in Member States, according to which, in Greece, more than 35% of Roma children do not attend school. Mavroyiorgos (2014) highlights the relative ineffectiveness of separate interventions (Roma programmes implemented in Greece since 1997) despite their high cost. He claims that, especially nowadays, because of the economic crisis, many students are underprivileged and are in need of additional educational support. In contrast, he recommends the implementation of holistic programmes aimed at tackling social exclusion (rather than targeting specific groups, such as the Roma, immigrants and repatriated, separately).

Another point made by some researchers regarding the limited effectiveness of these interventions relates to the issue of the involvement of Roma in them. Kostouli and Mitakidou (2009) point out that policy attempts in Greece have involved implementing programmes designed by experts in the field, but have not included people from the communities they study. They suggest that, in order for school changes to be successful, people from the Roma community need to undertake these changes/interventions (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009).

2.5.4. The Education of Roma in Greece: A Brief Discussion

As discussed above, in theory, intercultural and inclusive approaches frame the education of Roma in Greece. In particular, the participation of Roma in mainstream schooling is promoted. Moreover, various additional measures are provided to address some of the barriers to learning encountered by children in need of additional support (such as separate programmes and interventions addressing many groups of students who face language or learning difficulties). However, a conflict between the rhetoric and the practice appears to exist because, in many

cases, Roma students are schooled separately. As explained earlier (Section 2.5.2.), according to the official policy discourse, a separate school for Roma children is not regarded as desirable and is provided only in specific cases where there is no other solution. According to the data from the Ministry of Education (Appendix 1), during the school year 2005-2006,²⁸ 15% of Roma students at Greek schools attended one of the 14 (Roma) primary schools where only Roma students were registered. At the same time 21% of Roma students at Greek primary schools attended reception or tutorial classes.

When Roma students attend separate schools, there is no special provision for additional support (e.g. use of mother tongue or extra measures). Some scholars (Hancock, 1998) perceive separate schooling as beneficial for the Roma community and argue for a bilingual programme for Roma students in separate schools. In some cases, in the Greek context, the establishment of bi-lingual schools for Roma students has been called for in order to help preserve the viability of the Romani language, enhance the self-image of Roma and blunt the stereotypes of the Roma community held by non-Roma (Study on combating school dropouts, 2007).

Some positive trends have been reported regarding the school attendance of Roma (Gotovos, 2002). According to Themelis (2009b), during recent years, access to secondary and tertiary education has become easier for disadvantaged groups such as the Roma. However, it is estimated that a very small percentage (probably less than 10%) of Roma children who complete primary school continue to attend high school, of which 3 of its 6 years are compulsory in Greece. There are no available data concerning the attendance of Roma at institutions of higher education (Mavrommatis, 2008).²⁹ Themelis (2009c) argues that low

²⁸ This is the most recent data I have been able to access.

²⁹ Karpozilos (2004) quotes newspaper's report (ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ, 24/10/2003) claiming that it is the first time (in 2003) that a Roma student enters Greek University. This claim is proved erroneous because some of the participants in this research have entered Greek University earlier.

attendance rates for Roma students at primary, but particularly at the secondary school level, are still to be found in most European countries. According to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006) (cited in Themelis, 2009c), low attendance and high absenteeism rates might indicate, on the one hand, that Roma pupils and parents are not convinced of the importance of education and, on the other hand, that schools tend to have a more permissive attitude towards the absence of Roma pupils. Exclusionary practices against Roma students are still reported and, according to Dragonas (2012), the education provided to Roma pupils is still too often of low quality.

2.6. Summary

In this chapter, I have provided a critical account of some key issues related to the Roma in Greece in order to situate and contextualise my research. First, I considered some of the ways in which aspects of the living conditions and ways of living of Roma tend to be represented in Greece. Then, I reviewed the various social inequalities that Roma continue to confront in their daily lives. Finally, I considered official policies regarding the education of Roma and contrasted these with the current school situation where exclusionary practices still pattern Roma children's lives.

A particular 'profile' emerges from the literature that 'constructs' the Roma in Greece. This profile has mainly negative features which overlap with and reinforce a stereotypical representation of the Roma in Greece within policy and popular discourse. The Roma in Greece are generally presented as uneducated people who live in poor conditions and display inappropriate behaviours. However, as a number of commentators have pointed out, the Greek Roma constitute a heterogeneous group (Markou, 2008; Trubeta, 2008; Nikolaou, 2009; Zachos, 2011). Some Roma are poor while others are wealthy. Some Roma follow a lifestyle closer to traditional Roma patterns while others follow a more mainstream lifestyle. Some Roma adults are illiterate while

others have attended school and have reading, writing and numerical skills. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, it is this very heterogeneity of the Roma in Greece, particularly in terms of their social and financial status, which might help to explain why some Roma have appeared to succeed 'against the odds' and been able to access higher education.

In spite of this success 'against the odds' for a few Roma, it must be remembered that the majority of Roma experience exclusion in many respects as is well established in the literature (for example, see Exarchos, 1998; Chrysakis, 2004; Chatzisavvidis, 2007; Nikolaou, 2009). Exclusionary practices against the Roma are still obvious in Greece (see the active school exclusion in Aspropyrgos, Section 1.1.). Moreover, the document, discussed in Section 2.4., that the Greek Ministry of Education has sent to the Directors of Primary Education (of each county) in the beginning of the current school year (2012-2013) asking them to report head teachers who do not accept Roma students (esos, 2012) confirms the reproduction of practices of active exclusion against the Roma even today.

Data from the Greek Ministry of Education, combined with complaints from European organisations about discrimination against Roma children in Greece, underline a further contradiction between the rhetoric and current practices concerning Roma education in Greece. Despite the rhetoric around equality of opportunity, intercultural approaches and inclusion, most children from Roma communities continue to live in poverty and remain among the lowest academic achievers in Greece as is also the case in many other European countries (Symeou, Luciak & Gobbo, 2009).

To sum up, it seems that while much is known about the social exclusion of Roma in Greece and the difficulties that Roma children face in Greek schools, exceptional cases of those Roma who are regarded as successful in education have not been explored. In Greek academic literature, there is no study on any type of success achieved by the

Roma. In my study, therefore, I have chosen to address this gap by focusing on a small number of Roma (20 participants) who have succeeded in education. I examine how these individuals account for their success and I document and analyse the factors and influences that have facilitated their progression in education. Through a better understanding and interpretation of these cases of Roma who have succeeded in Greek education, this thesis will, I hope, yield some insights that can inform the development of policies for enhancing the education of Roma students in Greece. After having outlined the general context for my research in this first chapter, I now turn to the theoretical aspects underpinning my study.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Resources

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I contextualised my research by providing a critical account of some key issues related to the Roma and their education in Greece. This chapter, which serves as a theoretical compass for my study, explains the conceptual framework for my exploration. First, I introduce some key social justice concepts which will inform my discussion in subsequent chapters of issues regarding the education of Roma in Greece. I then explicate the Bourdieusian concepts of capital, habitus and field and their interplay. In subsequent chapters I will be using these concepts in order to analyse and theorise how my Roma participants who have accessed higher education in Greece, a form of success ‘against the odds’, account for their educational success, how they perceive success and what they recommend in order to better support the education of Roma in Greece.

3.2. Social Justice Matters

In the second chapter, I discussed the social context of the Roma in Greece and highlighted some key issues. Many of these issues raise social justice matters. For instance, the description of the poor living conditions of the majority of Roma in Greece raise issues related to economic justice (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002) whilst the lack of involvement of Roma in the design of interventions introduced to support the education of Roma children raises issues related to associational justice. Furthermore, social justice concepts permeate my participants’ narratives and their recommendations about how to support the education of Roma pupils in Greece (see Chapter 8). Thus, in this section, I discuss some key social justice concepts which will form part of the theoretical toolkit of my study under the broad

headings of economic, cultural and associational justice.³⁰ In what follows, I present the three facets of social justice separately for analytical reasons.

3.2.1. Economic Justice

Discussions of economic justice concern the question of how fairly material goods are distributed in society (Gewirtz, 2006). The meaning of economic justice has been expanded to include “the absence of exploitation, marginalization and material deprivation” (Gewirtz, 2006, p. 74).³¹ Exploitation refers to “having the fruits of one’s labour appropriated for the benefit of others” (Fraser, 1997, p. 13); marginalisation refers to “being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labor altogether” (ibid); deprivation refers to “being denied an adequate material standard of living” (ibid). Economic injustices influence other types of injustices. For instance, cultural injustices, to which I turn in the following section, frequently emerge from the material difficulties some people confront (Fraser, 1997).

When dealing with economic justice, it is common to differentiate between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. I will begin with the concept of ‘equality of opportunity’. According to Gewirtz (1998, p. 472), “equality of opportunity is viewed as being dependent upon the existence of equal formal rights, equality of access and equality of participation”. In the official Greek context, Roma children appear to be offered equal opportunities in terms of their access to education (e.g. attendance at the local mainstream schools).

³⁰ According to Fraser (1997), different forms of injustices are intertwined. In particular, “economic injustice and cultural injustice are usually interimbricated so as to reinforce each other dialectically” (Fraser, 1997, p. 15).

³¹ Concerns about the distribution of cultural and social resources (cultural and social capital in Bourdieusian terms) are also included in the discussions of economic justice (Gewirtz, 2006).

Although the Roma have equal formal rights, in some cases, they are not aware of these rights, and even when they are, they are not always able to exercise them (e.g. because of their illiteracy). For instance, the Greek state gives an annual allowance (of 300€ for each child) to poor families (those with an annual income lower than 3,000€) who send their children to school (in the compulsory stages of education).³² Taking into account that most Roma households have an income that is much lower than the poverty line in Greece, as noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.), most Roma families are entitled to this allowance. However, when studies cite that 83% of Greek Roma have no education at all (Chapter 2; Section 2.2.), I wonder how illiterate Roma parents will find out about the aforementioned allowance and how they will apply for this (e.g. are they able to find the necessary documents and are they able to complete the forms required?).

The gap between official policy on equality and actual equality is also apparent in relation to participation in school. As discussed earlier (Chapter 2, Section 2.4.), even when Roma children get registered at the local mainstream school, they often experience passive exclusion (Vergidis, 1995a), when their physical attendance is tolerated but in practice they do not participate in the educational process/school life. As shown in Chapter 1, there are also many examples of the active exclusion of Roma children from school (Vergidis 1995a), either because of protests from local society, or through administrative ways and a recent example of active exclusion was presented in Chapter 1 (Section 1.1.). Taking into account such examples, in combination with data which reveal that, despite the official inclusive discourse in Greece, there are separate schools in Roma camps where only Roma students get educated (as explained

³² Ministry of Finance. Ministerial decision Αριθ. Πρωτ.: 2/46354/0026 (20.07.2012) (ΑΔΑ: Β41ΧΗ-Ψ3Ρ) 'Καθορισμός διαδικασίας και δικαιολογητικών για την πληρωμή της εισοδηματικής ενίσχυσης οικογενειών με τέκνα υποχρεωτικής εκπ/σης και χαμηλά εισοδήματα' [Description of the process and documents required for the provision of financial support to students of low-income families in compulsory education].

in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.), it seems reasonable to conclude that claims that Roma have equal access to school need to be challenged.

As noted earlier in Chapter 2, in Greek schools, Roma students experience higher dropout rates, lower performance and higher rates of non completion compared to their non-Roma peers (Nikolaou, 2009). Equality of outcome “seeks to ensure equal rates of success for different groups in society through direct intervention to prevent disadvantage, for example via positive discrimination or affirmative action programmes” (Gewirtz, 1998, p. 472). Looking at the current educational provision for the Roma in Greece, it is clear that positive discrimination measures (e.g. in terms of accessing higher education) are not provided. However, there are some separate educational interventions addressing the Roma mostly in compulsory education (e.g. the programme «Εκπαίδευση των παιδιών Ρομά»/“Education of Roma children” run by Greek Universities) as detailed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.3.).

3.2.2. Cultural Justice

Cultural justice is described by Fraser (1997, p. 14) as being “rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication”. Examples of cultural injustices include (Fraser, 1997, p. 14):

cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one’s own); non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one’s culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions).

The above descriptions of cultural injustices underpin the experiences of Roma in Greece. First, the Roma in Greece frequently practice traditional customs that differ from the dominant Greek cultural patterns (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.).

In the context of education, Roma culture is often seen as inferior and is not recognised within the school system (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.). Second, Roma pupils are often treated as if they are invisible. For example, the fact that they sometimes enter school with a less secure command of Greek (Kostouli & Mitakidou 2009) is not addressed. The international literature suggests the benefits of using students' mother tongue in language teaching and learning (Cummins, 2008) and the Greek law provides the possibility of offering mother-tongue learning (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011; Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). However, the Romani language is not used in any type of educational context involving Roma pupils in Greece (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). In contrast, the Romani language and Roma home culture are often regarded as obstacles in Greek Roma's schooling (ibid). Drawing on Gewirtz's (2006) analysis of social justice, it could be argued that the above points illustrate that the way the Greek education system works can produce forms of "cultural imperialism" (Gewirtz, 2006, p. 77) by not valuing aspects (such as the Romani language).

The Roma in Greece are disrespected because they experience exclusion at a social level (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.). The Greek Media frequently represent the Roma in a negative stereotypical way (Labridis, 2004). Exclusionary practices of active and passive character also pattern Roma's education (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.).

3.2.3. Associational Justice

Associational justice is intimately related to matters of power and representation; that is the absence of:

patterns of association amongst individuals and amongst social groups which prevent some people from participating fully in decisions which affect the conditions within which they live and act (Power & Gewirtz, 2001, p. 41).

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.), in Greece the Roma experience social exclusion (Exarchos, 1998; Chrysakis, 2004; Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012). A key aspect of this exclusion relates to the lack of participation in exercising power (Mousourou, 1998). The examples which follow highlight the powerless position of the Greek Roma and some associational injustices that they experience in the context of education. As regards Roma's separate schooling, the establishment of separate schools is often decided on the basis of non-Roma hostile attitudes towards Roma students in specific locales and not, for example, on the basis of Roma parents' will for their children to be schooled separately. Moreover, Roma people are not involved in the design of interventions and programmes implemented for the education of their children which are designed by (non-Roma) experts (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.). Therefore, with respect to decisions about schooling, Roma are denied associational justice.

3.2.4. The Interplay of Social Justice Concepts and the Educational Success of Greek Roma: Dilemmas and Policy Implications

Educational sociology research has identified social injustice in educational settings and has analysed the ways through which education reproduces inequalities (Francis & Mills, 2012). According to this research, it is now the provision of a socially just education which needs to be prioritised (ibid). However, in doing so, educationalists need to consider Reay's (2012) argument (echoing Bernstein) that the school cannot compensate for the injustices existing in society (Bernstein, 1970). A socially just education system needs to take into account that "what happens outside the classroom matters as much as what happens in it" (Nandy, 2012, p. 678) in order to support those children in need. In order to enhance the educational success of Greek Roma, any interventions addressing their education need to be seen in relation to other domains, such as their living conditions. For

instance, as noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.), a lack of housing often leads to Roma's school dropouts or school failure and their eventual social exclusion (Hatzinikolaou & Mitakidou, 2005). Therefore, the economic injustices the majority of Roma suffer from are significant and influence any other aspect of their lives.

However, the Roma do not only experience economic injustices but also cultural injustices. It makes sense to argue that when Roma individuals are wealthy, and thus less at risk of experiencing economic injustices, they might still suffer from cultural injustices because of their Roma background. My point here is that the Roma in Greece suffer "both socioeconomic maldistribution and cultural misrecognition in forms where neither of these injustices is an indirect effect of the other, but where both are primary and co-original" (Fraser, 1997, p. 19). Thus, the situation of the Roma becomes more complicated compared to groups who, in the main, suffer from social injustices of one specific type.

In cases of compounded injustices (such as economic and cultural), the remedies required to address them are complex and can be contradictory (Power & Gewirtz, 2001) because of the tensions between the different forms of social justice involved (Fraser, 1997). Fraser (1997, p. 13) conceptualised "redistribution and recognition as two analytic distinct paradigms of justice" and identified what she called 'the redistribution-recognition dilemma'. When talking about the redistribution-recognition dilemma, Fraser (1997) refers to remedies which may have contradictory results. For instance, "redistributive remedies for political-economic injustice always de-differentiate social groups" (Fraser, 1997, p. 23) while "remedies for cultural-valuational injustice always enhance social group differentiation" (ibid). In Fraser's words, an affirmative approach "aimed at redressing injustices of distribution can end up creating injustices of recognition" (Fraser, 1997, p. 25).

Indicative examples of the tensions between the economic and cultural injustices experienced by the Roma and the consequent remedies required to address them are reflected in my participants' recommendations about how best to support the education of Roma pupils in Greece (developed in Chapter 8). For instance, some of their suggestions are in conflict with each other as they emphasise different types of injustices (e.g. economic or cultural). For example, the lack of available statistics regarding the Roma students in Greece, which limits a better understanding of the current schooling situation regarding the Roma pupils, does not only show some Roma's non registration on the municipality rolls; it also indicates tensions between economic and cultural justice. From the perspective of economic justice, the monitoring of Roma (e.g. data regarding Roma's under-representation in universities) has "a vital role to play in providing the information needed to combat discrimination" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2002, p. 503). However, from a cultural justice perspective, this kind of monitoring could operate "as a normalising, racialising and essentialising form of classification" (ibid). As a result, an attempt to monitor the Roma could facilitate any redistributive policies, but at the same time, the process of Roma's identification and labelling might result in their (further) marginalisation.

According to Fraser (1997), the redistribution-recognition dilemma can get 'finessed'. She argues that the best way forward is through transformative remedies, that is, socialist interventions at the level of the economy plus deconstructive cultural politics. However, Fraser (1997) recognises that in order for such remedies to be successful, all people need to "be weaned from their attachment to current cultural constructions of their interests and identities" (Fraser, 1997, p. 31). Thus, the feasibility of interventions around social justice issues is critical for policy-making because "what counts as justice in education cannot be divorced from judgements about what is possible" (Gewirtz, 2006, p. 79).

In my view, attention should be paid to the specificity of local contexts. Gewirtz (2006) emphasises the need to understand justice in education “within specific contexts of interpretation and enactment” (Gewirtz, 2006, pp. 69-70). Following Gewirtz’s argument (2006) about the “level- and context-dependent” (p. 70) way of understanding justice, I discuss two examples related to the Roma and their education in Greece. As discussed earlier (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.), the Roma in Greece are a heterogeneous group (Markou, 2008; Nikolaou, 2009). Markou (2008) gave examples of locales, such as in Agia Varvara (in Athens) where the Roma, in general, live in very good conditions (in terms of housing and living conditions) while in other regions, such as Aspropyrgos (in Athens), the opposite situation is frequently reported. Thus, the economic injustices experienced by the Roma in the latter cases call for policies of redistribution while these might not need to be prioritised in the former locale.

As far as the ‘level of enactment’ is concerned, it is possible to moderate the gap between economic and cultural remedies through the different agents who get involved in the relevant policies designed or/and implemented. For instance, policy makers might focus on the need to tackle Roma poverty. The categorisation and monitoring of Roma seems inevitable when dealing with redistribution as this involves state funding using taxes/money. However, remedies aimed at the school level could potentially mitigate any marginalisation that the labeling of Roma might provoke. For instance, inside the school/classroom, teachers can engage in initiatives addressing the cultural injustices their Roma students experience.

Before I finish this section, I need to refer to an argument that, according to Cribb and Gewirtz (2005), is frequently raised regarding policies based upon categorisation: categorisation can be “partly responsible for the production of the problem they are meant to be ameliorating” (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2005, p. 331). However, in my view, any attempts at redistributing (for the benefit of Roma) without referring to the Roma’s ethnic/cultural features reflect the following

argument made by Power and Gewirtz (2001, p. 46): dealing with socio-economic disadvantage without referring to race and ethnicity means hiding “the racialized nature of the social structure” and contributes to racism instead of addressing it.

In my thesis, I consider these social justice concepts in order to better understand the experiences of discrimination and marginalisation of some participants and the way my participants perceive and experience success. Moreover, I use these concepts in order to interpret my participants’ recommendations on how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece.

3.3. Capital, Habitus and Field

In my attempt to ‘detect’ cases of Roma who have succeeded in education in Greece, I frequently met people who doubted the existence of educated Roma. I consider their reaction as reflecting the stereotypes that persist concerning the Roma community. However, in sociological terms, this way of thinking could be understood as consistent with the idea that “social practices are characterised by regularities” (Maton, 2008, p. 50). As long as the Roma in Greece are not educated and do not ‘traditionally’ continue into higher education, it makes sense that many people expect that younger Roma will follow the same educational pattern. It is for this reason that I find Bourdieu’s work crucial for my study. Bourdieu’s interest in “how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled” (Maton, 2008, p. 50) makes his concepts central for my exploration.

In my study, I focus on cases of Roma people who have succeeded in education despite the odds. My participants’ stories are likely to include some cases of social transformation having taken place through education. Using Bourdieu’s theory in my study might seem challenging at first sight, because Bourdieu, in his texts, emphasised the role of education in reproducing class positions (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). However, the idea of social

change is not extraneous to Bourdieu's theory. In his work, Bourdieu gave space to exceptional cases – of people from disadvantaged backgrounds who succeeded in education - but he did not extensively detail them. His own successful pathway in academia despite coming from a rural family of modest economic means (Grenfell, 2008) could be an indicative example of exceptions like these. In my study, Bourdieu's concepts will serve as valuable theoretical resources for examining cases of Roma who succeed in education, and so help to illuminate the possibilities for change and social transformation through education (Apple, 2008).

While I recognise that capital, habitus and field are interrelated, in what follows, I attempt to analytically detail each concept separately in order to clarify how the concepts will be used in subsequent chapters.

3.3.1. Capital and the Educational Success of Greek Roma

As DiMaggio (1982, p. 189) argued some time ago, "it takes more than measured ability to do well in school". Factors of class, culture and familiarity with the system all have a part to play in students' progression. These attributes have been discussed as forms of capital by Pierre Bourdieu.

In order to understand Roma's successful educational pathways in Greece, I start by focusing on their capital. For Bourdieu:

capital is accumulated labor ... which, when appropriated on a private ... basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 15).

Moore (2008) argues that while 'capital' is usually associated with economics and monetary exchanges, in Bourdieu's theory the term 'capital' is employed in a wider system of exchanges. According

to Moore (2008, p. 102), Bourdieu regards these exchanges as “a wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations of which the economic is only one (though the most fundamental) type”. In particular, “economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 24).

3.3.1.1. Economic Capital

For Bourdieu, economic capital is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 16). The financial resources available to my Roma participants are of importance, especially because the overwhelming majority of Roma households in Greece have an income that is below the poverty line in Greece (Review Report; for more details see section 2.2.1.).

However, taking into account Roma’s heterogeneity, I expect to recognise ‘fractions’ among them in terms of possession of money and property. Some Roma are wealthier and live in good conditions. Their access to financial resources might play a role in their trajectory of success. Access to money, living in a permanent residence, being able to ‘invest’ in education might have facilitated some of my participants’ educational pathways. It makes sense to hypothesise that being accommodated and having access to material goods facilitates the ‘accommodation’ of the two other types of capital in which I am also interested: cultural and social capital. I consider these two non-monetary types of capital crucial for my exploration. However, it needs to be kept in mind that for Bourdieu, economic exchanges are the most fundamental type of exchanges (Moore, 2008). In addition, “the different types of capital ... change into one another” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 16). Thus, other forms of capital such as cultural and social capital “can be seen as ‘transubstantiated’ forms of economic capital” (Moore, 2008, p. 102).

In my study, I recognise that economics plays a part in my participants' progression. Thus, I do not overlook aspects of economic capital, as any form of capital cannot be understood in isolation from its other forms; they "together constitute advantage and disadvantage in society" (Reay, 2004a, p. 57). I am not interested in a quantifiable approach towards my participants' financial situation, but in a more descriptive one, where the conditions of their upbringing and adult lives and their positioning as low-income, intermediate or wealthy matters.

3.3.1.2. Cultural Capital

Bourdieu argues that:

the notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 17).

From the above, it is clear that Bourdieu explained school success more through the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family milieu rather than by measures of individual talent or achievement (Reay, 2004b). Could access to particular forms of cultural capital account for the educational success achieved by my Roma participants? And if so, what made their cultural capital different from that of other Roma?

What is of paramount importance is the idea that cultural capital "embodies or transmits the logic of practice of the field in a way that differentiates and therefore establishes hierarchies" (Grenfell, 2009, p. 20). Hence, the acquisition of different types of cultural capital positions students at school in different ways. Students who bear those forms of cultural capital that are appreciated and rewarded at

school 'hold' a more powerful position in the field of education which in turn facilitates their educational success.

Bourdieu describes cultural capital as convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and as potentially institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 2004). In particular:

cultural capital can exist in three forms: a) in the embodied state (i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body), b) in the objectified state (in the form of cultural goods such as pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines) ... and c) in the institutionalised state ... (educational qualifications) (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 17).

Reay (2004a) argues that cultural capital is primarily transmitted through the family. For the purposes of my study, I take into account that this transmission begins in childhood. The accumulation of cultural capital in its embodied form "requires pedagogical action" (Reay, 2004b, p. 74), the investment of time by parents, family members or even professionals to expose the children to cultural distinctions and familiarise them with these values (Reay, 2004b). Thus, I am interested in exploring these aspects in relation to my participants' educational trajectory. Had their families invested time in their education? Were their parents interested in their school progression? For example, my participants' access to cultural goods, such as books, could be a token of the objectified state of cultural capital that my participants bear.

In my study, the potential relationship between my participants' family resources and their educational progression will be worth exploring. Any relationships between my Roma participants' home backgrounds, their schooling experiences and their individual educational careers will be of great interest. As Reay (2004a) puts it, integral to cultural capital is the "analysis of the interactions between home background, the processes of schooling and a child's educational career" (Reay, 2004a, p. 58). In this approach, the mother's role is recognised as centrally related to the family's contribution to its child's capital, "particularly in the form of the

mother's free time available ... to ensure the transmission of this” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 25).

3.3.1.3. Social Capital

In Bourdieu's work, social capital is:

the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119).

I regard social capital as another crucial concept in my attempt to explore and analyse what makes a difference for Greek Roma's successful educational lives. For the purposes of my study, social capital includes the social networks in which my Roma participants were involved but also includes the education values and attitudes in circulation in these networks. In my exploration, I have taken into consideration the widely held idea that education is not significant in the Roma community (Chatzisavvidis, 2007; for more see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). Thus, I am interested in investigating the role Roma and non-Roma social networks might have played in my participants' successful educational trajectory. In my study, I am mainly interested in understanding if and/or how beneficial my participants considered their social networks to have been for their educational success. In addition, I want to explore the way my participants understand the role their educational experiences might have had for expanding/enhancing their social networking and how helpful this could be for their future positions in the labour market.

The relationship between social capital and education is significant in exploring cases of Roma in Greece who have followed successful educational pathways. Gamarnikow and Green (2003, p. 212) argue that according to social capital theorists, a society with high levels of social capital is a “cohesive, well-functioning society, with improving socially desirable outcomes and fewer negative ones,

such as crime and social exclusion". Studies suggest that enhanced forms of social capital result in higher rates of economic growth, higher educational levels and better health (see Halpern, 2005). In particular, research in this area is often taken to suggest that there is a causal relationship between the extent of social bonds within families and communities, on the one hand, and children's achievement at school and their future economic prosperity, on the other (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). "Evidence suggests that social capital has a significant impact on educational outcomes" (Halpern, 2005, p. 166).³³

In my study, when I explore the notion of social capital in relation to my participants, first I want to focus on the relationship that my Roma participants had with their parents and the nature of their parents' involvement in their education. In addition, the relationships my Roma participants had with their siblings and their siblings' educational pathways are of interest to my study, potentially as a useful 'indicator' for the family's contribution to its children's progression.

The relationships developed between my participants and other relatives is also an aspect I will explore, in particular in relation to the existence or not of "positive examples" - cases of other Roma who have followed successful educational pathways. Moreover, I consider the wider relationships of my Roma participants within the Roma community worth exploring as the effects of community social capital on educational performance have been found to be significant (see Halpern, 2005). Because of the generalisation that Roma undervalue education, it will be useful to explore whether the Roma communities with which my participants were connected followed this pattern or not. It will be important to see if educational progress was regarded in a positive or negative way by these Roma people with whom my participants had strong relationships or connections.

³³ Indicatively, according to Gamarnikow and Green (1999), intra-family social capital contributes to children's educational achievement.

In addition, relationships between my participants and their Roma neighbours as well as connections with non-Roma people and impacts from these interactions will also be explored. Whether non-Roma people have encouraged the educational success of my Roma participants is of particular interest, because the relationships between Roma and non-Roma are frequently presented as negatively patterned (Labridis, 2004; for more see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.).

Connections that my participants had with non-Roma people will include their relationships with teachers and their peers during the school years. Roma and non-Roma fellow-students, friends and every type of peer network could have had an impact on my participants' trajectory.

Finally, some other significant networks, such as the church and religious groups, political parties and sports groups and other types of groups/organisations in which my participants might have been involved need to be taken into consideration. In such cases, members get involved in group activities with peers and may be influenced by adults/significant others beyond their immediate family and community.

In this discussion of capital, it is necessary to raise issues of gender. According to Halpern (2005), a community with few or no outside links might limit the educational aspirations of some of its members, especially females, whose educational choices may be strongly shaped by their community's notions of gender appropriateness and gendered 'success'. In relation to the Roma community in Greece, where "there is a persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles of women" (Dragonas, 2012, p. 5), one might expect that social capital in the Roma community would add pressure to Roma women to get married early and not go on into higher levels of education.

At this point, I should add that for Bourdieu, the density and durability of ties are vital. As he puts it, social capital is the "aggregate

of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 21). It makes sense to expect that it is difficult for Roma people who travel for trading reasons to create and preserve durable networks. According to Israel, Beaulieu and Hartless (2011), the stability of living in a locality for a long period without interruption by a physical move to another school or community helps children do better in school. Thus, it will be useful to explore if my Roma participants were settled in permanent residences or in a specific area and if this had helped them preserve dense and durable relationships which facilitated their successful educational trajectory.

I am not assuming that all the types of social networks I have outlined above will have affected my participants’ individual pathways; neither do I claim that these are the only social networks which could have done so – working separately or in conjunction - or that all aspects of social capital necessarily affect educational achievements in a positive way. Following Gamarnikow and Green (2003, p. 213), I would argue that social capital is “neither intrinsically good nor bad; it is simply a way of conceptualising aspects of the social”. In my study, I perceive all students as potentially having social networks/connections. However, only certain types of networks/connections are ‘rewarded’ at school and/or provide easy access to educational qualifications. As will become clear in the analysis that follows, only some types of networking/social capital have a positive effect on students’ educational progression and place them in a more ‘powerful’ position in the educational context than those who lack these forms of social capital.

In other words, some forms of social capital promote educational achievement while others discourage it, distracting students from their progress. Field (2003) explores evidence related to social capital’s negative consequences – what he refers to as ‘the dark

side of social capital'.³⁴ From this point of view, some forms of social capital a) are potentially considered to reinforce inequalities and b) can be considered to play a part in some forms of antisocial behaviour (Field, 2003). In the case of the educational success of Greek Roma, where educational progression does not seem to be traditionally encouraged by the Roma community, it would be useful to explore the way various social networks have affected my participants' pathways - in particular, the way 'internal' community networks (such as parents, relatives, Roma peers) have 'worked' for them. It also makes sense to assume that my participants have connections with other Roma of a similar age – who might have dropped out from school and followed more traditional pathways – such as trading and getting married early; yet the participants in my study have avoided this 'dominant direction' and followed successful educational pathways.

Thus, in my study, I explore the impact of different forms of social capital on educational achievement. Detailing the positive effect that some forms of social capital can have on the achievement of Roma – particularly because Roma are regarded as a non-privileged group - could introduce a more 'creative' theoretical use of the notion of social capital in educational research. Lauglo's claim that accessing certain forms of social capital can 'trump' the disadvantages of social class and weak cultural capital (Lauglo, 2000) could be a useful analytical tool for my analysis.

3.3.2. Habitus and the Educational Success of Greek Roma

Having explored the notion of capital and its relevance for my research, I now turn to habitus, the concept which "lies at the heart of Bourdieu's theoretical framework" (Reay, 2004c, p. 431). Bourdieu (2006, p. 72) describes habitus as:

³⁴ Here, I recognise that Field (2003) developed the concept of 'the dark side of social capital' following Putnam's approach.

systems of durable, transportable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.

For Bourdieu, habitus is a property of social agents that comprises a structured and structuring structure (Bourdieu, 2006). The habitus of my Roma participants is structured by their past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is ‘structuring’ in a sense that their habitus contributes to shape their current and future practices in relation to their education. According to Bourdieu (2006), a choice or behaviour of someone can be explained by his/her habitus even when this habitus’ shaping conditions are not present anymore. In other words, the habitus “develops a momentum that can generate practices for some time after the original conditions which shaped it have vanished” (Maton, 2008, p. 59). Understanding habitus as a ‘structure’ means that it is “systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned” (Maton, 2008, p. 51).

In this exploration, I take into account that for Bourdieu (2006, p. 87), “the habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences”. Thus, I consider primary socialisation in the family as deeply formative for one’s habitus. In my study, I concentrate on Roma families’ habitus, however, Roma’s heterogeneity at many levels makes any attempt to describe features of a Roma habitus much more difficult. Indeed, Bourdieu (1993, p. 46) regards habitus as “the product of all biographical experience”. Based on a Bourdieusian rationale, I approach the differences among individuals of the same cultural grouping keeping in mind that “just as no two individual histories are identical, so no two individual habitus are identical” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 46). Thus, “habitus, within, as well as between,

social groups, differs to the extent that the details of individuals' social trajectories diverge from one another" (Reay, 2004c, p. 434).

While it is not easy to talk of a collective/group capital when recognising the differences between individual habitus, Bourdieu (2006, p. 85) asserts that:

each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for the members of that class.

Thus, it can be argued that the Roma in Greece share a similar habitus in a sense that they tend to make similar choices and behave in similar ways, such as start a family at a young age instead of continuing into higher levels of education. As a consequence, it will be crucial for my exploration to focus on the habitus of my participants and their families in order to understand how my participants were successful if or when their families are not or were not familiar with success in education. The role of my Roma participants' families in their educational pathways is of interest as well as my participants' choices in relation to their success in education. (In addition, I find intriguing the possibility of detecting similar features in my participants' habitus.)

However, habitus is also influenced by other factors. Schooling is significant for my participants' educational success. In Bourdieu's words:

The habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences ... and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences ... and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 87).

So, although an individual habitus is primarily structured by someone's early childhood experiences in the family and thus "reflects the social position in which it was constructed" (Reay, 2004c, pp. 434-435), it is continually restructured by other contexts carrying within it "the genesis of new creative responses that are capable of

transcending the social conditions in which it was produced” (Reay, 2004c, p. 435). Thus, there are possibilities for one’s habitus to be transformed. This idea of possible transformation is crucial for my participants’ cases in relation to their having followed an educational pathway ‘against the odds’.

Following Maton’s (2008) explanation of aspects of habitus, when I explore the concept of habitus in my study, I will focus on the ways my participants act, feel, think and are; through my participants’ stories I will attempt, by emphasising their educational trajectories, to understand how each of them carries his/her history, how he/she brings it into his/her present circumstances and how he/she chooses to act in a certain way and not in another. However, I take into consideration that while my participants have made choices in relation to their educational pathways, these choices might depend or have depended “on the range of options available (to them) at the moment, the range of options visible (to them) and on their dispositions, the embodied experiences of (their) journey” (Maton, 2008, p. 52).

Reay (2004c, p. 432) argues that for Bourdieu “habitus offers the only durable form of freedom - that given by the mastery of an art”. This means that habitus allows for some individual agency. However, habitus also predisposes individuals towards certain ways of behaving (Reay, 2004c). In Bourdieu’s words:

the habitus, as the system of dispositions to a certain practice, is an objective basis for regular modes of behaviour, and thus for the regularity of modes of practice, and if practices can be predicted ... this is because the effect of the habitus is that agents who are equipped with it will behave in a certain way in certain circumstances (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 77).

In my study, I am interested in exploring any connections between my participants’ habitus and their educational success. What I am interested in examining is if my participants’ habitus has “matched” the field of education or at least has not “mismatched” it. If this is the case, then I am interested in exploring how this was

achieved when Roma are widely considered to underachieve or fail at school.

For Bourdieu (1990, p. 116):

habitus realises itself, becomes active only in the relation to a field, and the same habitus can lead to very different practices and stances depending on the state of the field.

Thus, to better understand the role of habitus in my theorising my participants' accounts for the success in education, I now turn to Bourdieu's concept of field.

3.3.3. Field and the Educational Success of Greek Roma

In order to explain an event or social phenomenon, Bourdieu regarded it necessary to examine the field in which this event or social phenomenon occurred (Thomson, 2008). For Bourdieu (2011, pp. 40-41), field is:

a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies.

Thomson (2008) claims that Bourdieu regarded education as a field which "reproduced itself more than others and those social agents who occupied dominant positions were deeply imbued with its practices and discourses" (Thomson, 2008, p. 76). Bourdieu was concerned to "show the socially (re)productive effects of formal education" (ibid).

In my work, I understand the field of education as a space that contains privileged and non-privileged students. Students who bear specific forms of capital (e.g. access to material and/or cultural goods and/or powerful social connections) with a habitus which offers them a

'powerful' position in the field of education are privileged. Following Bourdieu's rationale, privileged students can be seen as players who begin with particular forms of capital and (Thomson, 2008, p. 69):

are advantaged at the outset because the field depends on, as well as produces more of, that capital. Such lucky players are able to use their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further (be more successful) than others.

As I have already explained, the Roma in Greece experience significant problems in relation to their education. Thus, I would expect Roma students to be less privileged at school – mostly because of their Roma origin, the exclusion experienced by their group and the reduced access to material and cultural goods this community frequently experiences. However, my research explores Roma's success in the field of education. The successful trajectories that my Roma participants have followed can therefore be seen as exceptions. In cases like these, the socially (re)productive effects of formal education are questionable; in contrast, these participants' stories might indicate cases where less privileged students have struggled for and achieved social change and transformation of and through the field of education.

According to Bourdieu, many non-privileged individuals try to find ways to change their lives (Reay, 2004c). Based on what Bourdieu writes in *The Contradictions of Inheritance*, it could be argued that the movement of habitus across a new, unfamiliar field can result in (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 511):

a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and its ambivalences, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of the self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities.

Following the above argument, it could be the case that non privileged agents' attempts to change their lives might concomitantly influence their sense of group belonging, raising identity issues. It could be that some Roma feel pressured to retain their cultural identity and 'choose' not to participate in education; it might be the case that

the price of participation and educational success is some loss of belonging to the Roma community. My study explores how my Roma participants' capital and habitus work in the field of education (mostly understood as the space of school), at least according to their accounts. However, I will keep in mind, that just as in football, what happens in the field is "boundaried" (Thomson, 2008, p. 69). Thus, there are "limits to what can be done, and what can be done is also shaped by the conditions of the field" (Thomson, 2008, p. 69).

Bourdieu's argument that education is one of a series of strategies used by dominant groups to maintain the status quo (Bourdieu, 1996) is a great challenge for my study. My Roma participants have succeeded in education despite coming from a vulnerable group which experiences inequalities and exclusion in Greece (for more see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.). Was education a strategy for my participants to improve their social position? Have my participants had any forms of capital which facilitated their educational pathways despite the odds?

For Bourdieu (in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 108-109):

social agents ... are rather bearers of capitals and depending on their trajectory and on the position they occupy in the field by virtue of their endowment (volume and structure) in capital, they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution.

Based on the above extract, I will need to explore the capitals my participants bore when they entered the field of education. I am interested in exploring how my participants' capital worked in the field of education and how my participants were positioned in the field of education.

3.3.4. The Interplay of Capital, Habitus and Field and the Educational Success of Greek Roma

In Bourdieu's work, his concepts are strongly interrelated. That is the reason why, in this part I want to approach the interplay of capital, habitus and field in relation to my research. For Bourdieu, "such notions as habitus, field and capital can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). Thomson (2008) argues that Bourdieu regarded capital, habitus and field as an "inter-dependent and co-constructed trio ... with none of them primary, dominant or causal" (p. 69). Even the different types of capital have an interlocking relationship. Bourdieu (2004) highlights the interrelations between capitals when stating that one form of capital can be transformed into another. For example, economic capital can be converted into cultural capital, while cultural capital can be converted into social capital. These, however, are complex transformations which are not simply and easily achieved (Reay, 2004a). Thus, for my research purposes, I will explore the economic, cultural and social capital of my Roma participants and, despite my primary focus on the two latter forms, any transformations between these types of capital will be considered.

The concepts of capital and habitus are strongly connected. Perhaps the best way to highlight the interrelation between habitus and capital at this point is by using Moore's interpretational approach towards Bourdieusian concepts. Moore (2008) argues that in Bourdieu's theorisation there are two basic forms of capital: the objectified and the embodied. Between these two there is a third expression of capital in the form of habitus. Unlike capital, habitus does not have a material existence in itself. Moore (2008) argues that Bourdieusian habitus resembles the rules of chess or the rules of grammar. These rules are insubstantial and cannot be found in a material form; they can only be known through their realisations in practice: in the games of chess or acts of speech that each set of rules enables (Moore, 2008).

However, these forms of capital should be seen as being, in an important sense, “continuous with each other, as ‘moments’ of one thing rather than three different varieties of the thing” (Moore, 2008, p. 105). In exploring the accounts by Roma of their educational success, this interweaving between habitus and capital is crucial because habitus is shaped by capitals and habitus works in a way that preserves or even reshapes the existing capital.

The concepts of capital and field cannot exist separately. “A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). As Bourdieu states:

in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field.

Thus, in my study, I approach my participants’ capital taking into consideration the field of education in which their capital functions. Field and habitus constitute “a dialectic through which specific practices produce and reproduce the social world that at the same time is making them” (Thomson, 2008, p. 75). My participants’ values and dispositions towards education are seen in relation to the field of education, in particular through the way my participants’ pathways were developed.

The strong relationship between the three concepts - habitus, capital and field - is summarised by Bourdieu through the following formula: $[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$ (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 95). This equation argues that “practice results from relations between (one’s) dispositions (habitus) and (one’s) position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of the social arena (field)” (Maton, 2008, p. 51). It also reveals the interlocking nature of habitus, capital and field showing that practices are a result of the relations of habitus and current circumstances (Maton, 2008).

3.4. Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the key theoretical concepts that comprise the toolkit for my data analysis. In particular, I have described Fraser's concepts of economic, cultural and associational social justice and the Bourdieusian concepts of capital, habitus and field which underpin my exploration and I have detailed their use in relation to my research topic. I now turn to another theoretical chapter which examines the concept of 'success' - a key notion for my exploration.

Chapter 4. Mapping Educational Success

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores a core concept of my research: 'educational success'. First, I explain why I have taken Roma's access to higher education as a proxy for educational success. Second, I provide a brief account of the value of higher education in Greece. Third, I discuss key studies of educational success and relate them to my research. Next, I identify key factors which contribute to educational success. Finally, I consider the contextual and relational aspects of educational success.

4.2. Describing Educational Success for the Greek Roma

This study takes Greek Roma's access to higher education as evidence of success. The main reason for this is that it is the 'opposite situation' which occurs far more frequently: Roma's failure at school. I regard 'failure' as comprising a continuum of negative situations, such as underachievement, early drop out and non-completion of compulsory education. In my study, 'success' presupposes that the above 'negative' situations have not happened. In addition, I take access to higher education as evidence of success because of the value that higher studies have in Greece (see Section 4.2.2 below). Moreover, the cases of Roma people who have accessed higher education in Greece are 'exceptional'; they have made it 'against the odds' as it seems that only few Roma have achieved this goal.

My study therefore shifts the research focus from Roma school dropout and underachievement to Roma educational success at a higher level. Through focusing on higher education, I explore the accounts of Roma who have experienced all the levels of the Greek educational system. Graduates and students in higher education are expected to have stayed at school and achieved highly – or at least

performed well enough. Thus, the examination of cases of Roma in higher education covers, to an extent, secondary education experiences. In addition, as will be seen, my sample also includes cases of mature Roma students who have accessed higher education through alternative educational pathways (such as other types of education, e.g. Second Chance Schools,³⁵ Hellenic Open University³⁶) and not directly through the mainstream school. These cases would probably have been missed, if I had focused on lower school levels. Moreover, if I had focused on school success, I would have narrowed the concept of educational success by concentrating only on school performance. My emphasis on Roma adults who have accessed higher education has also enabled me to include participants of different ages, thus facilitating a consideration of intergenerational differences related to Roma educational success (e.g. how the impact of gender has changed over time).

Passing or failing milestone exams is frequently a crucial marker in studies dealing with educational success (see Archer, 2008; Ingram, 2011). My description of success as access to higher education is informed by the aforementioned rationale; students enter Greek higher education on the basis of the results of the National (Panhellenic) Exams at the end of high school.³⁷ Students enter a

³⁵ Second Chance Schools were first introduced in Greece in 1997. They address adults who have not completed secondary compulsory education. Completion of the second chance school is equivalent to completion of lower high school.

³⁶ The Hellenic Open University (HOU) provides distance education at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Adults (who have completed - at least - secondary education) can apply to enter the HOU. (The HOU charges fees for its programmes.) Due to the fact that the number of applicants exceeds by far the number of places available, selection takes place through a random public electronic draw. Indicatively, 4,790 places were available for undergraduates for the academic year 2015-2016 as shown in the relevant Ministerial Decision published in the Government Gazette JO 2569 (26.09.2014). Καθορισμός αριθμού παρεχομένων θέσεων του Ελληνικού Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου (Ε.Α.Π.) για φοιτητές προπτυχιακών προγραμμάτων για το ακαδημαϊκό έτος 2015-2016 [Number of places for undergraduate students at the Hellenic Open University for the academic year 2015-2016].

³⁷ There are special categories of students who enter higher education through distinct routes, such as participation in different exams (e.g. by Greek expatriates), being offered lower limit grades/special places (e.g. students belonging to the Muslim minority of Thrace) or having the Panhellenic Exams grade requirements waived (e.g. students who have achieved distinction in academic competitions and athletes who have achieved distinction in athletic competitions) (panelladikes.gr, 2013). Moreover, adults can apply

specific department on the basis of their performance in the National (Panhellenic) Exams although the standard required shifts according to the demand by students³⁸ to enter the specific department. When the demand outnumbers the available places, as often occurs for many departments, and particularly the most prestigious ones, the students with the higher grades are admitted (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008). Thus, while entrance to higher education might seem easier and more accessible nowadays as there are more available places, the type of department an applicant enters is significant.³⁹ Many secondary school students prepare for these competitive entry exams years ahead through attending extra private lessons in preparatory schools (“frontistiria”/φροντιστήρια) and/or through private tutoring (Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou, 2005). These extra private tutorials (frontistiria) for high school students constitute a parallel type of schooling in Greece; their value seems at least equivalent to the mainstream school (Themelis, 2013).

To summarise, I take Roma’s entrance to higher education as a marker of educational success as only few Roma have achieved this ‘against the odds’. However, my approach also has an ‘objective’ basis as higher studies are significant in Greece. In the following section, I briefly discuss the value of higher studies in Greece.

4.3. The Value of Higher Studies in Greece

In Greece, university studies have been historically considered important to the country’s future and lend status and esteem to participants (Livanos, 2010). However, higher education in Greece

to enter the Hellenic Open University. In addition, graduates who have completed their undergraduate studies can enter a second degree programme through the process of ranking/placement (katataktiries exetaseis/κατατακτήριες εξετάσεις). Each department has its own selection process based on internal exams or based on the grade of the applicants’ first degrees.

³⁸ There is a maximum of students that each university department can admit every year, determined by the Greek Ministry of Education.

³⁹ For instance, students from privileged backgrounds do not only seek university entry but entry to the ‘correct’ university and make decisions about the department and subject of study on the basis of their interests and preferences (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2010) – their habitus/distinction.

cannot be seen in a unified way as there are differences between universities, schools and departments.⁴⁰ Despite the absence of official league tables for Greek universities, some institutions are regarded as more prestigious than others. For instance, universities are considered of higher status than technological educational institutions (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2010). Moreover, some specific subjects, such as medicine⁴¹ and law, are more highly rated because they lead to prestigious professions (ibid) - in spite of high unemployment rates/few job opportunities.⁴² Such 'elite' university departments accept students with high grades and are considered better than the others (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2010). However, the transient provision of job opportunities in specific fields means that during specific periods a student needs to achieve highly in order to enter departments which are not high status. For instance, because of the high rates of teacher employment in Greek schools during the last decade, the Greek Departments of Primary Education became highly desirable, competition for a place in them became strong and high achievement was required for entry (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011).

After 1964, a raft of policies such as abolishing fees at universities, an increase of the number of entrants to higher education, changes in the nationwide exams (central determination of topics/questions and decentralised realisation) and the establishment of new schools/universities in smaller cities made higher education more accessible in Greece (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, 2003). In particular, after the 1997 educational reform, the number of places in

⁴⁰ Higher education in Greece comprises two sectors: universities and higher technological education institutes (TEIs). In 2001, TEIs were incorporated in the technological sector of higher education (Gouvias, 2012).

⁴¹ Livanos (2010, p. 475) cites an OECD study in 2006 where it was found that "there are more physicians per capita in Greece than any other country".

⁴² In 2010, in Greece, 11,000 out of the 43,500 lawyers have never been in court (Eleftheros Tupos, 2010). Furthermore, there are high unemployment rates for medical school graduates and a generally difficult transition to the labour market due to the oversupply of doctors (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2009).

higher education almost doubled (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2009).⁴³

In Greece, there has always been a strong demand for higher education even after the 1997 expansion (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2008).⁴⁴ In 2008, the proportion of Greeks who studied at higher education was higher than the average in the European Union (Express ths Kyriakhs, 2008). Moreover, Greece is one of the countries with the highest worldwide proportion of students studying abroad (Lianos et al., 2004).⁴⁵

The high demand for university entry can mainly be explained by the fact that a university degree is a requirement for getting a job anywhere in the Greek public sector (Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou, 2005).⁴⁶ In Greece, civil servants are hired for life and have many privileges (ibid). The public sector has traditionally been preferred to the private sector because of the better salaries, working conditions and pensions provided (Livanos, 2010). The low cost of higher education (no fees at university for the first level/‘degree’) is also a factor that accelerated this strong demand for higher education in Greece (Livanos, 2010).

During the current period of austerity in Greece, the long-standing positive relationship between high qualifications and employment is being eroded. Currently, the Greek economy seems unable to absorb the continuous supply of highly educated individuals (Themelis, 2013). In contrast, Greece is the country with the highest youth unemployment rate in the EU (Karamessini, 2010). Compared with the OECD average rates (OECD, 2015), in 2013, in Greece, the

⁴³ Indicatively, between 1956 and 2001, the number of students in tertiary education increased around 16 times (19,864 → 328,100), while between 1977 and 2001, the increase was fourfold (cited in Themelis, 2013, p. 82).

⁴⁴ In 2008, around 70.3% of high school graduates were admitted to higher education (Asderaki, 2009).

⁴⁵ In 2007, proportional to its size, Greece was ranked first in terms of student migration (cited in Themelis, 2013).

⁴⁶ The high demand for higher education in Greece had also been related to the high rate of young people who complete secondary education and to the increasing number of females at higher studies following women’s empancipation (Liagouras et al., 2003).

unemployment rate among individuals with tertiary education was high (13%, rank 1/36) particularly among 25-34 year-olds (26%, rank 1/35).

A strong demand for higher education is still reported despite the mismatch between higher studies and the labour market in Greece (Liagouras et al., 2003). This is likely to be in part because of higher education's symbolic value, as for many decades higher education has been the means to improve occupational conditions and social-class positions (Themelis, 2013). Although this trend for improvement is not necessarily evident anymore, the long-standing belief in upward social mobility through education is well-established in Greek society (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011).

4.4. Educational Success: Key Studies

In the field of sociology of education, a growing interest in the experiences of students deemed to be educationally successful has emerged (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2009). Yet there are relatively few accounts that compare different conceptions of educational success. A notable exception is found in Hoskins' (2010) research. In her PhD thesis, Hoskins had collected and analysed a variety of sources that dealt with the meaning of success, including 'unorthodox' literature, in her attempt to examine the perceptions of career success held by 20 female professors in the UK. Hoskins (2010) concluded that success can be viewed as an unfolding and continuous process. She argued that success is frequently conceptualised as a road to be travelled, a journey with the promise of arriving at a destination with the realisation of achievement (Leatz, 1993, cited in Hoskins, 2010). Success is also characterised as the fulfillment of individual goals. In contrast, for Jones (2004, cited in Hoskins, 2010) success is not a destination but an ongoing process. Hoskins (2010) also detailed the view of occupational success often evident in management literature as being portrayed as a ladder, characterised by achieving a series of goals or meeting certain criteria. For instance, Sturges (1999), in her study of

how managers describe what career success means to them, identified a) external criteria (in material terms, such as position in the hierarchy and level of pay); b) internal criteria for success (e.g. feelings of accomplishment, enjoyment and achievement); and c) intangible criteria (influence and personal recognition) in their descriptions. Thus, there are different ways of understanding the concept of success and educational success. However, there is a common factor presented in most attempts to describe educational success: the notion of achievement of a goal.

Turning to studies that focus on educational success, a frequent starting point for characterising a student as educationally successful is the criterion of passing specific exams or a student's achievement in a significant examination (Rollock, 2007a; Archer, 2008; Ingram, 2009; Ingram, 2011). In what follows, I critically review some key studies dealing with success in education in my attempt to draw together some basic components of success that have informed how I employ the concept in my study.

The first example of research on educational success that I explore comes from Ingram's work (2009; 2011). Ingram (2011) highlighted the difficulties that some working-class grammar school boys faced in reconciling their background/ identity with the educational success they experienced. In her work, she took high-achieving working-class boys within a grammar school with a good local reputation⁴⁷ who had succeeded in the Northern Ireland 11-plus exam as being educationally successful. Ingram's (2011) understanding of educational success becomes meaningful when the educationally successful working-class boys are seen in comparison with a second group of boys from the same region who had not followed the same pathway and who continued into a secondary school with a pathologised reputation.

⁴⁷ Ingram (2009) claims that the normal route through the school includes obtaining nine or more GCSEs then three A levels to gain a place at university.

Despite Ingram's emphasis on passing the Northern Ireland 11-plus exam as a milestone in students' progression, a key point of transition, she approaches educational success as a continuum where passing this exam is a critical moment. Attending a grammar school is also related to studying for post-compulsory A levels that in turn facilitate entrance to University - aspects of educational success these boys are experiencing or are expected to achieve. As Ingram (2009, p. 422) writes, "the grammar school boys usually go on to experience continued educational success by gaining more than five GCSEs and then A-levels". Thus, in Ingram's (2009) description, the possibility of future and extended educational success is also considered to be of paramount importance in conceptualising what is involved in success in educational terms.

In Ingram's work, educational success a) is seen as continuous where critical moments such as passing milestone exams are crucial and b) has a relative character in comparison to an alternative pathway: a route for those who fail at specific milestone exams and attend a secondary school of different type (not a grammar school). Another aspect of educational success emerges from Ingram's (2009) work: the importance of early school dispositions and expectations of success. In Ingram's (2009) study, most of the pupils attended the same primary school. This school divided its pupils into two classes at 9/10 years of age according to their expected success or failure at the 11 plus exam. To extrapolate from Ingram's work, in my study, primary school teachers' expectations of my Roma participants' educational success might have influenced their successful educational future trajectories to some degree.

A more elaborated theorisation of success in education is introduced in Rollock's work through her discussion of 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' success. Rollock (2007a; 2007b) explored how staff and pupils at an inner city secondary school in the south of England constructed academic success. Rollock (2007a) recognised that teachers frequently understand academic success to mean the achievement of high grades (which she refers to as "exclusive

success"). In her research, staff preferred to conceptualise academic success as the improvement in educational performance or aspects of a pupil's personal development, regardless of the grades obtained ("inclusive success") (ibid). Rollock's (2007a; 2007b) notion of inclusive success implies an emphasis on individual development and personal improvement at many levels - outside a strict instrumental emphasis on higher grades. This approach is in keeping with my own understanding of education as a wider system of internal cultivation and self-improvement. However, according to Rollock's (2007a) findings, while teachers express a desire to value all pupil achievement as a form of success, in practice, under the pressure to meet Government targets, they approached success as follows: they related "exclusive success" to the attainment of A* to C grades at GCSE and turned to "inclusive success" as the 'second best' option to refer to the personal development of those students who have not achieved "exclusive success". According to Rollock (2007a), black children are generally seen as less capable of achieving 'exclusive' success because their appearance and behaviour are regarded by teachers as being at odds with the aims of the school. Similarly, in Greece, it might be expected that in the formal educational system, a discourse of educational success based on exclusive terms underpins the assessment of Roma students and therefore disadvantages them and has a negative impact on their progression.

Another study which has informed the conceptualisation of educational success used in my research comes from Power, Edwards, Whitty and Wigfall's work. Power et al. (2003) mapped out the educational pathways followed by 350 middle-class students, and in doing so challenged the widely perceived idea that middle class academically able children 'destined for success' achieve academic success, access to higher education and entry into middle class occupations. All the participants in their study had been considered 'academically able' at the beginning of their secondary education. Most of them had been identified as students of "grammar school ability" (Power et al., 2003, p. 27); they had all been included in the top

20 per cent ability band deemed “naturally equipped for selective schooling, higher education and high-status employment” (ibid).

In this study, conventional measures including achievements in comparison with the national average were used to characterise success and failure. More specifically, the achievement of five or more ‘good’ passes at O-level or GCSE was taken as a proxy for academic success (Power et al., 2003). However, the relative aspect of success and failure also emerges. Middle-class students could be considered to have ‘failed’ when their parents achieved a higher level of education than they did and to have ‘succeeded’ when they achieved higher levels of education than their parents or their contemporaries’ (Power et al., 2003). Moreover, in some cases what looked like ‘success’ felt like ‘failure’; for the majority of the students in this study, “lack of conventional educational success indicated personal failure” (Power et al., 2003, p. 107) even when their results were respectable. Thus, the relative character of success and failure emerges in relation not only to the students’ families but also in relation to their own or their school’s aspirations (Power et al., 2003).

In Power et al.’s (2003) study, three aspects of educational success emerge: first, the impact of performance in milestone exams in characterising a student as educationally successful; second, the relative character of success which might be considered differently in different contexts (such as conventionally measured success; better achievement compared to parents; success on the basis of individual aims and school aspirations); third, an understanding of educational success as a continuous process which leads (and is valued because it leads) to success in other fields, such as professional success (success at milestone exams → attendance at high status educational institutions → occupational success).

I now turn to Archer and Francis’ (2007) work on minority ethnic achievement which also involves some discussion of the notion of educational success. Archer and Francis (2007) draw attention to the emphasis placed by education policy in the UK on performance in

examinations. Some “racialised as well as classed and/or gendered forms of success” realised by minority ethnic young students is detailed in more depth by Archer (2008, p. 92). She presents four types of relationships to educational success that she used as a device to understand the meaning of success in her study. She points out that her typology of success is not ‘exhaustive or fixed’ but contextualises her arguments about “how/why dominant constructions of success (and the identity of the ‘ideal pupil’) are ‘impossible’ for many minority ethnic pupils” (Archer, 2008, p. 92).

In what follows I briefly outline Archer’s (2008) four types of success:

- a) *“Traditional” academic success*: This form of success relates to pupils who achieve highly in national examinations.
- b) *“Good enough” success*: This form of success relates to students “whose overall levels of academic achievement are good but not necessarily ‘the highest’ (e.g. Bs and Cs)” (Archer, 2008, p. 93).
- c) *“Value-added” success*: This form of success is mostly associated with a more “personal or subjective experience of achievement” (Archer, 2008, p. 93) and shows the improvement achieved by a student who had originally been at a lower level. This form of success was understood in terms of a ‘distance travelled’ (or ‘value added’) and can be seen as a relational measure of success in contrast with traditional understanding of success as meaning objective academic success; reminiscent perhaps of Rollock’s (2007a; 2007b) ‘inclusive success’.
- d) *“Desired-denied” and “potential” success*: This type of success relates to students who currently underperform despite their abilities for potential (albeit unachieved) educational performance.

From Archer’s (2008) typology, it becomes evident that there can be “multiple possible performances of ‘success’” (Archer, 2008, p. 92). These approaches to success focus on different aspects of pupils’

progression such as an objective relationship to the level of academic achievement in national examinations (*traditional academic success*) or a subjective/relative relationship to pupils' previous attainment (value-added success).

Archer (2008) claims that teachers follow a pathologised approach of 'othering' (even) in cases of high-achieving students of minority backgrounds. By analogy with her arguments, it maybe posited that some teachers' stereotypes about Greek Roma will persist, even when Roma students perform well at school – an attitude which perhaps inhibits the educational progression of some Roma students.

Another example of research which fed into my conceptualisation of educational success comes from Byfield's (2008) study. Byfield (2008) examined cases of black males in the USA and the UK who had successfully accessed higher education at elite universities and less selective institutions. She drew on qualitative interviews conducted with 40 black male students under the age of 25 from diverse social class backgrounds, family structures and degree disciplines.⁴⁸ In Byfield's (2008) study, (academic/educational) success was understood as access to and choice of good (prestigious) universities. A Bourdieusian notion of cultural capital underpinned her study.

⁴⁸ Byfield (2008) categorised the students in her research into three groups (Sprinter Boys, Relay Boys and Marathon Boys) based on their educational cultural heritage as it relates to their family history of participation in higher education. These three categories are briefly described as follows (for more, see Byfield, 2008, p. 9): A. Sprinter Boys: This category included boys with a family history of participation in higher education. In most cases these boys came from upper middle class backgrounds. In Bourdieusian terms, the strong family educational background gave them an advantageous position as they had the greatest amount of cultural capital, B. Relay Boys: This category included boys whose parents entered higher education as mature students during their sons' schooling. In most cases these boys came from lower class backgrounds but their parents were attempting upward social mobility. The increased cultural capital that Relay Boys' parents had access to, facilitated their sons' dispositions that helped their progress into higher education; C. Marathon Boys: This category included boys who are the first generation in their families to attend universities. Almost all these boys came from lower social class backgrounds. These boys were in the most disadvantageous position in education because their parents had given them the least amount of cultural capital (Byfield, 2008).

Byfield (2008) noted that many of her participants reported negative experiences and displayed some negative behaviours at school, such as experiences of racism, misbehaviour and resistance to teachers' authority. In addition, most of the participants' parents had not provided help at home and had not been involved in events valued by teachers such as parents' evenings and associations. However, these black boys had made it and most of them entered elite universities. Byfield (2008) unpacked the following factors which led to her participants' educational success:

a) Parental involvement: Most parents in Byfield's study had not deployed practices which are often more valued by teachers (e.g. help with homework and participation in parents' evenings and associations). They directed their sons effectively through various different means. The key element is that these parents held strongly pro-educational values which informed all their behaviours and practices in a way that facilitated their sons' progression.

b) The contribution of schools, teachers and community projects: Some teachers played a significant role in black boys' progress through practices such as effective engagement in education, motivation, emotional sponsorship, equal treatment and high expectations (Byfield, 2008). In many cases, black male teachers enhanced their black students' feelings of pride and contributed to a positive sense of identity (Byfield, 2008). Moreover, the Black community's interventions provided black students with role models as well as an enhanced and culturally rich curriculum (ibid).

c) Religion: Religion was identified as a significant factor which facilitated black boys' progression through providing a purpose in life as well as additional capital (e.g. in some cases, mostly in the USA, black boys accessed additional cultural capital through the educational support offered by their churches). Religious books also served as sources of cultural capital. Many black boys highlighted their spiritual connection to God as a factor in their progression; this spiritual

connection is labelled by Byfield (2008) with the term Divine Capital. The possession of Divine capital could enhance both the social and cultural capital of black students (ibid).

d) Students' personal qualities and navigational tactics: Byfield's boys recognised the following factors as having been involved in their success: hard work, determination, good time-management and discipline towards studying (Byfield, 2008). As far as friendships were concerned, different attitudes were reported by black boys including 'hiding their ambitions' and 'choosing friends who aimed high'. Sometimes, the young males in Byfield's study tried to maintain their friendships with less ambitious peers; in other cases, they ended their friendships with peers who disapproved of them for studying hard (Byfield, 2008).

My interest in exploring cases of students who have succeeded in education against the odds is similar to the one informing Byfield's (2008) study. Racialised discourses found in Byfield's research sensitised me to similar discourses which have sometimes affected some of my participants' experiences of 'being othered' - such experiences are presented in my data chapters (e.g. in Chapter 6, Section 6.5.). Moreover, Byfield's (2008) typology of success factors aided my attempt to map out the basic dimensions of educational success.

Rhamie (2007) focused on African-Caribbean progression in the UK and took the attainment of A* to C grades at GCSE as a proxy for success. She found that family, school, community and individual characteristics had played a significant role in her participants' success against the odds. She categorised her participants as *High Fliers*, *Retakers*, *Perseverers*, *Careerists* or *Underachievers*⁴⁹ to

⁴⁹ *The High Fliers:* These students achieved at least the minimum 5 A*-C grades at GCSEs and completed year 11; *The Retakers:* These students retook exams in the first few years after leaving school to eventually achieve at least 5 A*-C GCSEs; *The Perseverers:* These participants returned to education as adults and achieved undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications many years later; *The Careerists:* These

present the differences in the school experiences of those who academically succeeded and those who did not. The main factors identified as having contributed to the academic success achieved by Rhamie's participants are summarised as follows (Rhamie, 2007):

a) Home factors: Parents, regardless of their own educational level, valued education and had high expectations of their children. Parents encouraged their children to work hard and motivated them to do well. Students received encouragement as well as practical help (e.g. with their homework). The school education of their children was crucial for many parents whose children followed successful pathways.

b) Community Factors: Attendance at church and religious clubs, music tuition, youth clubs, sports and visits to libraries and museums appear to have affected Rhamie's participants in a positive way. The community served "as a source of motivators, encouraging friendships and role models" (Rhamie, 2007, p. 34).

c) Individual Characteristics: Academically successful African Caribbean students referred to motivation, religious belief and having goals as factors which facilitated their progression.

d) School: Positive school experiences were reported by many of Rhamie's successful participants who, in the main, experienced a positive school ethos and met helpful teachers. However, Rhamie (2007) found that many of her academically successful participants (coming from all the groups described above) had some negative experiences at school, such as lack of teachers' support, experiences of discriminatory treatment compared to white classmates and racist behaviours against them. Rhamie (2007) highlights that these negative experiences did not influence her participants in the same ways, because some participants were able to protect themselves through the cumulative effect of positive experiences at home (e.g.

participants had achieved vocational qualifications; *The Underachievers:* These participants had no GCSEs or qualifications.

high expectations, encouragement, help with homework) and within the community (e.g. achievement-oriented activities). Thus, Rhamie (2007) reported *resilience* as important in achieving success in the sense that her successful participants were able to recover from hardship and counteract the impact of negative school experiences thanks to protective factors coming from home and the wider community.

Rhamie's (2007) finding that some students succeed in education regardless of the negative experiences they might have had at school, and the role that resilience plays in this success, is important for my study, because exclusionary practices against the Roma at school and lack of enthusiasm towards the Roma students from educators are frequently documented in Greece (Nikolaou, 2009). According to Nikolaou (2009, p. 550), "it is assumed that many educators hold hostile attitudes towards Roma". In addition, Rhamie (2007) examined cases of academically successful African-Caribbeans who have been mature students (the *Retakers* and the *Perseverers*); this fact is of importance for my research as some cases of Roma mature students – who continued their education during their adulthood - were also included in my study.

I now turn to Reay, Crozier and Clayton's (2009) research on academically successful working-class students in elite UK Universities. In this study, academic success was associated with the achievement of at least three A grades at A-level exams and then entrance to elite UK Universities. On the basis of Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and cultural capital, Reay et al. (2009) argued that their participants, since their early school years, had been able to successfully move between two different fields – the working-class home and the middle-class school. This successful movement was a result of processes of self-conscious reflexivity developed by these participants where "self-awareness and a propensity for self-improvement become incorporated into the habitus" (Reay et al., 2009, p. 1105).

Reay et al. (2009) also referred to resilient behaviours displayed by their participants as well as their ability to cope with adversity. In particular, Reay et al. (2009) suggested that the features of resilience and coping with adversity are frequently evident in working-class contexts where they are supposed to exist in terms of “making the best of a bad situation” (Reay et al., 2009, p. 1107). These qualities enabled working-class students to deal with unfamiliar middle-class contexts (Reay et al., 2009). Thus, these working-class students succeeded against the odds thanks to “internal resources and a self-reliant independence” (Reay et al., 2009, p. 1107). Their participants talked of personal characteristics, such as determination, self-reliance, motivation and hard work, involved in their academic success (Reay et al., 2009). Individual teacher’s support was also recognised as a factor in the access to elite higher education achieved by these participants. In contrast, the institutional habitus of school had played a minor role (ibid).

One core argument raised in Reay et al.’s (2009) study is that individual qualities, such as motivation, resilience and determination, have in the main made the difference for these academically successful working-class students in elite universities and resilience is once again reported as a significant factor in academic success. To conclude, it is worth stating that the working-class participants in Reay et al.’s (2009) study report that their success was achieved at a great cost: their peer group’s disapproval.

Finally, Wright’s (2011) work explored how academically successful African American male adolescents achieved school success while at the same time maintaining their racial-ethnic identity. Wright (2011) took high performance at school as a proxy for academic success.⁵⁰ In Wright’s (2011) research, his African American

⁵⁰ Wright’s (2011) description (of academic success) is informed by the following indicators: academic success identified by the school, an earned Grade Point Average of a 3.0 or higher, positive relationships with teachers and peers as confirmed by the school’s responsible personnel and active participation in extracurricular activities as reported by the young men.

male participants are academically successful and concomitantly maintain a 'healthy' racial ethnic identity, identified as "pride in in-group identification, confidence in one's academic abilities, competence in awareness of racism and comfort with respect to self-presentation of racial ethnic identity" (Wright, 2011, p. 612).

However, academic success frequently comes at a high cost for young African American men; the failure to develop a positive sense of racial-ethnic identity (Wright, 2011). In contrast, in Wright's (2011) study, a healthy racial-ethnic identity helped explain why some African American male adolescents successfully navigated the worlds of home and school to achieve academic success. Resilience emerged as significant in this study as well, as, according to Wright (2011), these African American men were aware of impediments and discriminatory behaviours that were likely to be met and were prepared to react in resilient ways to overcome these barriers.

Wright's (2011) study highlights the potential significance of a 'healthy' ethnic identity as a source of success. Moreover, the idea that educational success is often achieved at a cost - for instance, in terms of forms of marginalisation and exclusion inside and outside - is also relevant to my study.

To sum up, based on research into academic/educational success discussed above, the following features emerge as signals of success: entrance/attendance at highly rated educational institutions (Power et al., 2003; Byfield, 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Ingram, 2011; Wright, 2011), passing milestone exams (Ingram, 2011), high performance (Power et al., 2003; Rhamie, 2007; Rollock, 2007a; Rollock, 2007b; Archer, 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Ingram, 2011; Wright, 2011), better achievement compared to others (e.g. peers and parents) (Power et al., 2003), promise/perspective of future progression (Power et al., 2003; Ingram, 2009) and self-improvement (Rollock, 2007a; Rollock, 2007b; Archer, 2008). These features are summed up in Figure 4.1. What has also emerged is the range of

variables that are involved in achieving educational success and the social-emotional costs that can sometimes be involved.

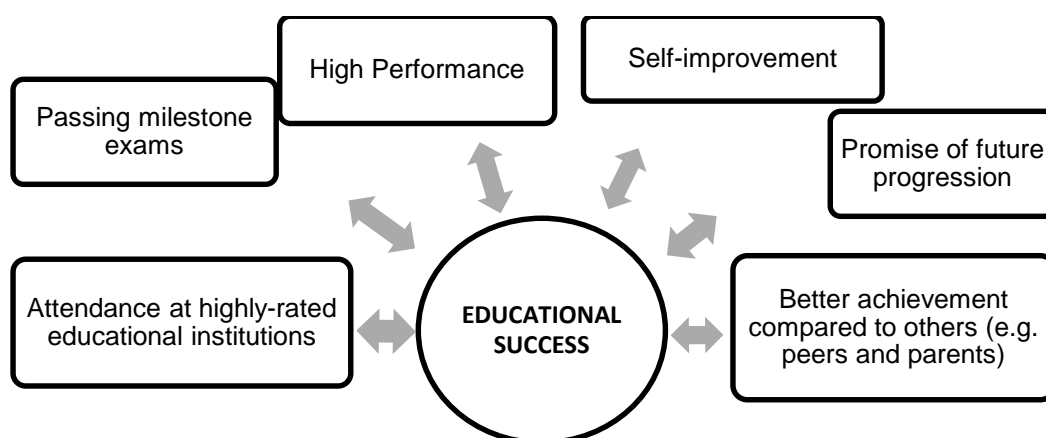


Figure 4.1. Features of the Concept of Educational Success

4.5. Unpacking Factors of Educational Success

In this section I attempt to unpack the notion of educational success through exploring its dimensions. Some of these factors have already been discussed in the previous section (for more details see Section 4.4.). I have grouped the factors identified as contributing to educational success using the following clusters: family factors; community factors; school factors; individual qualities and navigational techniques; circumstantial factors, serendipity and luck as shown in Figure 4.2 on page 103.

In the categorisation presented here, some factors are included in more than one category. For instance, 'Role Models' are included in family factors as successful relatives might boost educational success. However, these successful examples might come from the community environment. Thus, 'Role Models' have been included in the community factors as well. However, I detail these factors when I refer to them for the first time. In addition, some categories overlap in practice. For example, while some school aspects can be considered as community aspects, here I presented 'School' separately as this

category's role seems crucial for my study because of my emphasis on the field of education. I now turn to each of these clusters.

4.5.1. Family Factors: Family factors such as parental involvement (Byfield, 2008), the importance of education in the family (Byfield, 2008), practical help (e.g. with homework) (Rhamie, 2007), expectations of success (Rhamie, 2007), positive role models (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008) and sponsorship and mentoring (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Hoskins, 2012) seem crucial in achieving educational success. Below, I focus on two of these dimensions: sponsorship and mentoring and role models.

Sponsorship & Mentoring: Based on Hoskins' (2012) descriptions, *sponsorship* contributes to educational success in a sense that sponsors offer opportunities to students for their progression in the context of education. *Mentoring* helps someone become educationally successful as mentors offer guidance, advice and counsel to students in a way which enhances students' agency towards educational success. Mentors, such as family members as well as people from the community (e.g. people in the church and older friends) were reported as having positively influenced academically successful African-Caribbeans in the UK (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). In addition, Byfield (2008) refers to the emotional sponsorship offered by teachers to some black boys who followed successful academic pathways.

*Role Models*⁵¹: According to Rhamie and Hallam (2002), many academically successful African-Caribbeans in the UK were influenced by role models. In particular, in many cases, family members and people from the community (e.g. people in the church, older friends and successful people encountered during visits to the Caribbean) had served as positive exemplars for some academically successful African-Caribbeans in the UK (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). The effect of

⁵¹ The concept of role model is contested but here I deploy this term to convey the positive influence that examples of success had on my participants.

role models in black boys' progression is also identified by Byfield (2008). In many cases, black boys accessed black role models through their community's interventionist programmes (ibid).

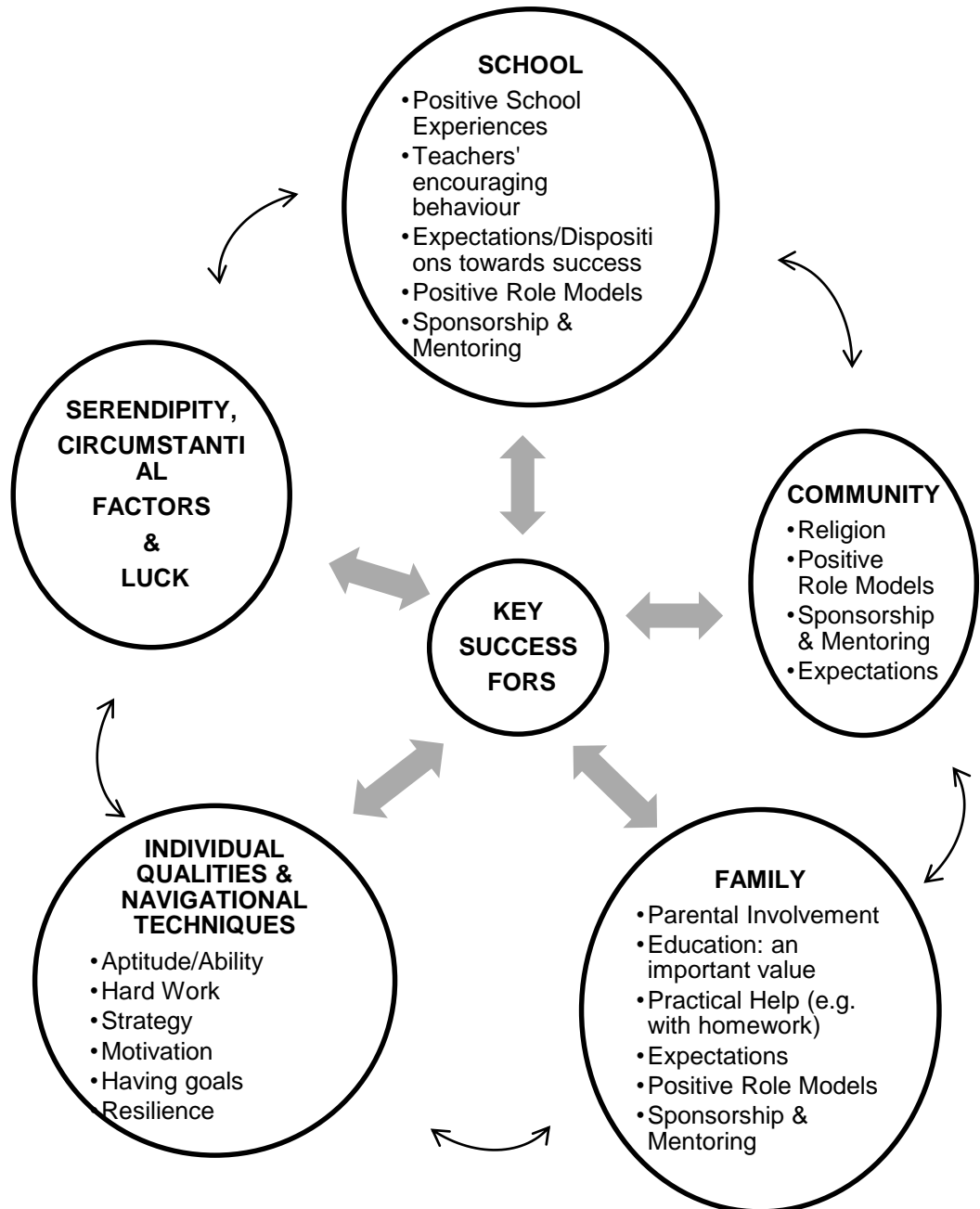


Figure 4.2. Key Factors in Educational Success (according to the literature)

4.5.2. Community Factors: Community factors such as religion (Rhamie, 2007; Byfield, 2008), expectations of success (Rhamie, 2007), role models (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008) and sponsorship and mentoring (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Hoskins, 2012) play a significant role in achieving educational success.

4.5.3. School Factors: School factors such as positive school experiences (Ingram, 2009), teachers' encouraging behaviour (Rhamie, 2007; Byfield, 2008), expectations of success (Rhamie, 2007), positive role models (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008) and sponsorship and mentoring (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Hoskins, 2012) contribute to educational success.

Teacher's impact on their students' educational success emerges as significant. Emotional sponsorship offered by teachers to some black boys facilitated their progression (Byfield, 2008). Reay et al. (2009) also noted that some of their participants recognised their teachers' contribution to their progression. However, teachers offered help as individuals and not as a part of their institutional duties (ibid). In contrast, there are cases where teachers' attitudes can have a negative impact on students. Archer (2008) showed that the minority background of high-performing pupils can serve as an obstacle to their being perceived as educationally successful by their teachers. Similarly, the absence of such stereotypes would be expected to positively contribute to (minority) students' successful educational pathways.

At this point, I should emphasise that school factors do not always facilitate educational progression. In contrast, Rhamie's (2007) study shows that some educationally successful African Caribbean students had negative school experiences. However, in many cases, these students had developed resilience through which they managed to overcome their school environment's negative impact (ibid).

4.5.4. Individual Qualities and Navigational Techniques: Individual qualities and navigational techniques, such as aptitude/ability, hard work (Byfield, 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Hoskins, 2012), strategising (Hoskins, 2012), motivation (Rhamie, 2007), having goals (Rhamie, 2007) and resilience (Rhamie, 2007, Reay et al., 2009; Wright, 2011) have all been identified as playing a part in educational success. For example, some working-class students in elite UK universities have attributed their progression mainly to work “on and of the self” (Reay et al., 2009. p. 1105). According to Hoskins (2012), a factor contributing to educational success is determination and pursuit of a strategy towards a desired goal. Resilience emerged as a key concept in Rhamie’s (2007) study as detailed above (see Section 4.4.). In what follows, I explicate four of these individual dimensions: a) ability/aptitude; b) hard work; c) motivation; d) resilience.

a) *Ability/Aptitude*: An educationally successful student is expected to be ‘bright’. In Archer’s (2008) “*Desired-denied*” and “*potential*” types of success, the ability for educational attainment is identified in some students who ‘underperform’ in terms of their abilities or potential for educational attainment. According to Kristoff (2009, p. 2, cited in Hoskins, 2010), “a higher I.Q. correlates to greater success in life”. However, “the relationship between success and IQ [only] works up to a point” (Gladwell, 2008, p. 79). Gladwell (2008)⁵² likens intelligence to the height of a basketball player in order to argue that intelligence matters, but past a certain point, it stops mattering so much. Consequently, a student has to be intelligent enough in order to become educationally successful. However, a high IQ does not necessarily lead to educational success, which means that there are

⁵² Malcolm Gladwell is a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and was formerly a business and science reporter at the *Washington Post*. In *The Outliers*, Gladwell (2008) attempts to explain the careers of successful people. He claims that the explanation of these extraordinary success stories can generate lessons for society. Gladwell (2008) asserts that the extent to which success happens because of things the individual has nothing to do with is vastly underestimated. Throughout this book, he attempts to indicate that success is a ‘group project’ and is achieved through the contributions of many different people and many different circumstances.

many intelligent people who have not experienced educational success. Moreover, aptitude could not be considered alone as sufficient to ensure educational success. Ability is coupled with luck and hard work (Gladwell, 2008; Hoskins, 2012).

b) Hard work: Brooks (2009, cited in Hoskins, 2010, p. 1) contrasts intelligence with practice and concludes that IQ is “a generally bad predictor of success”. In contrast, “top performers spend more hours (many more hours) rigorously practicing their craft” (ibid). Similarly, Gladwell (2008, p. 39) suggests that the “people at the very top don’t work harder or even much harder than everyone else. They work much, *much* harder” (italics as original). In particular, Gladwell (2008) refers to ‘the 10,000-hour rule’, which is described as being the number of hours that an individual needs to devote to a particular area in order to achieve expertise. Similarly, Hoskins (2012) mentions hard work as contributing to her academics’ progression in a sense that “sheer persistence, determination and application makes a difference” (Hoskins, 2012, p. 117). Hard work was also reported by Byfield’s (2008) participants as a significant factor involved in their success.

c) Motivation: In a social cognitive perspective, motivation is described as “an internal state that arouses, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behavior” (Glynn et al., 2011, p. 1160). Two types of motivation are frequently described in the literature: a) intrinsic motivation which is described as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56) and b) extrinsic motivation which relates to rewards (Lin et al., 2001) and refers to getting involved in and/or completing a task because it results in a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation appears to influence student engagement and performance (Reay et al., 2009; Paloş et al., 2011) and relates to high-quality learning and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students are considered to be able to regulate their motivation to learn and this self-regulation of motivation can influence achievement in a positive way (Paulino & da Silva, 2011). Moreover, according to Zimmermann et al. (1992, p.

674), “perceived efficacy to achieve motivates academic attainment”. In contrast, the lack of motivation is regarded by pupils and educators as a barrier in achieving school success (Paulino & da Silva, 2011). Motivation is often studied in relation to grit, which is described as perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), and recent studies suggest that there are distinct motivational and cognitive foundations for dimensions such as grit and determination (Von Culin et al., 2014).

d) Resilience: Resilience is another characteristic which plays a part in attaining educational success (Rhamie, 2007; Masten et al., 2008; Wright, 2011; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). ‘Resilience’ is often considered to be ambiguous and is used in different ways in different contexts (Reid & Botterill, 2013). However, studies coming, in the main, from the field of psychology have a clear explication of the concept. For example, Masten et al. (1990) approach resilience as, first, high performance for high-risk students; second, sustained competence of children under stress and, third, recovery from trauma. In my work, resilience is mainly understood as the ability of some members of high-risk groups (the Greek Roma in the case of my study) to resist adversity and overcome the difficulties they confronted growing up (e.g. poverty and discrimination) (Rutter, 2007) and managing to progress in education.

Research findings suggest that resilience is involved in students’ educational success. For instance, Rhamie’s (2007) study on the progression of African-Caribbean students in the UK demonstrates the importance of resilience in achieving success. Her participants were able to protect themselves from hardship and counteract the impact of negative school experiences in order to succeed (for more see Section 4.4.). Goldstein and Brooks (2013) have broadened the concept of resilience to focus on all children’s need to develop a ‘resilient mindset’ so that they become able to protect themselves and react effectively in case of adversity. They describe resilience as (cited in Brooks, 2013, p. 443):

the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact comfortably with others, and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity.

Masten (2001), in her work on resilience, used the term 'ordinary magic' to argue that resilience is nurtured through ordinary processes and not magical or extra-ordinary ones. For example, children's resilient behaviours relate to being a good learner and problem-solver, being competent in domains highly-regarded by self or society and having a good relationship with a competent adult (Masten et al., 1990). In particular, studies highlight the influence of the parental role in developing resilience (Brooks, 2013). Moreover, studies highlight the role that resilience plays in students' educational progression in terms of the part played by their educators. For example, CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) was recently implemented in some districts of the USA to improve "teachers' well-being, motivational orientation/efficacy, and mindfulness" (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 38). The results of CARE were promising in assisting educators teaching in high-risk educational environments and also improving classroom settings. Brooks and Goldstein (2008) also highlight the lifelong impact educators can have on their students when trying to advance their resilience.

Although in my work I take a Bourdieusian perspective emphasising the structural factors which contribute to Roma students' educational progression (such as their familial economic and cultural capital), the four individual qualities described above appear as playing a part in educational success. Therefore, it makes sense to expect that these individual features might also get involved in Greek Roma's educational pathways.

4.5.5. Circumstantial Factors, Serendipity & Luck: In this section, I take into consideration that factors outside the agency of educationally successful people, such as specific circumstances, serendipity and luck, can be involved in their progression. Serendipity might play a role as some success may be attributable to elements of chance, destiny and/or accident (Hoskins, 2012). Gladwell (2008) presents Bill Gates' story⁵³ as an indicative example where luck facilitated success. Bill Gates had the opportunity to get exposed to software development at a young age thanks to a lucky series of events which gave him the advantage of extra time to practice (Gladwell, 2008). As far as *circumstantial factors* (such as social patterns and culture, including historical context) (Gladwell, 2008; Hoskins, 2010) are concerned, Gladwell (2008) emphasises the role of cultural and historical circumstances in explaining Bill Gates' case of success. According to Gladwell (2008), the historical moment Bill Gates was born into (the dawn of the information revolution) considerably shaped Gates' possibilities for success in combination with other elements of success – that Hoskins (2012) describes as fixed - such as Gates' privileged background. Taking into account that, in Bourdieu's theory, practices are relations between one's habitus and one's current circumstances (Maton, 2008), the relationship of a student's habitus with current circumstances could lead to certain practices that could help to secure educational success. That is to say, circumstances can prove crucial for a student's progression. Policies of affirmative action or even small-scale interventions addressing the education of Roma in Greece could have facilitated the educational progression achieved by those Roma students who happened to be at school during the period of these programmes.

To conclude, the aspects described in Figure 4.2. emerge as significant in achieving educational success. However, it should be recognised that, first, this description might be 'incomplete', and

⁵³ Bill Gates established Microsoft, the world's largest computer software company and is one of the world's wealthiest people.

second, that these dimensions are likely to interact with one another to produce success.

4.6. Summary

In this chapter, I have examined 'educational success' as a key concept that frames my study. First, educational success has a historically specific and context-related meaning. This means that educational success has a particular meaning for certain people in a specific context at a particular period of time. Second, educational success has objective and subjective elements. For example, conducting doctoral research at an elite university would be widely considered as success in education. However, in Greece, it is not easy to characterise a young employed teacher as successful when compared to an unemployed lawyer, because, as discussed in Section 4.3., the status of a university law department is higher than that of a university education department. Third, the way educational success is perceived and potentially performed is related to identity aspects such as race/ethnicity, social class, gender and age. Aspects of educational success as detailed here in this chapter inform my study and more specifically the analysis of my empirical data discussed in chapter seven.

Chapter 5. Methodological Considerations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and research process I employed in my empirical study. First, I provide a theoretical account of the qualitative approach I chose in order to investigate my topic along with my justification for choosing this approach. Second, I present my research aims and the rationale informing my study. Third, I describe how I accessed participants for my study and the difficulties I confronted. Then, I reflect on what is involved in in-depth interviews and explain their suitability for my research study. I also elaborate on how I utilised this tool for data collection, with particular reference to the interview process. Next, I focus on the coding process and the procedural intricacies involved in analysing the data I collected. Then, I turn to some language issues raised in my study. In the penultimate section, I discuss the importance of taking an ethical approach to my research study and describe what I did and I detail issues of positionality and reflexivity in relation to my role as researcher. Finally, I summarise the key points of my methodological approach in my concluding remarks.

5.2. Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

I have selected a qualitative approach as the most appropriate for my exploratory research study. ‘Qualitative research’ is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of social life (Saldaña, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 3) offer a generic description of qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” and which “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (ibid). The breadth of what is called qualitative research embraces a mosaic of orientations (Yin, 2011). Thus, instead of trying to provide an exhaustive account of what qualitative research is, it is more useful to highlight its main features; these include

“studying the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions” (Yin, 2011, p. 7) and representing the views and perspectives of the research participants (Yin, 2011).

The word ‘qualitative’ highlights the processes and meanings that are “not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). Qualitative researchers study topics in their natural settings, “attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 8) argue that:

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

According to Silverman (2010), the choice of a particular methodological approach should be related to the paradigm being followed and to the topic studied. Silverman (2010, p. 10) expresses a pragmatic rationale (horses for courses) according to which the “research problem defines the most appropriate method”; that is ‘fitness for purpose’. In my study, a qualitative approach was followed as I saw it as suitable to serve my research aim. In my research, I wanted “to capture context, personal interpretation and experience” (Mishna, 2004 cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 54); I wanted to gain insight into my respondents’ worlds through their eyes, exploring their meanings and understandings of events, following their worldviews as grounded in their direct experience of following a successful pathway in Greek education. In my research, a qualitative approach was practiced through conducting in-depth interviews with my Roma participants.

5.3. Research Aim and Questions

The main aim of my research is to shed light on how Roma people in Greece who have followed successful educational paths through accessing institutions of higher education account for their educational success. The key research questions guiding my study and its design are the following:

- What factors facilitate the educational success of my participants?
- In what ways do my participants describe educational success and to what extent do they consider themselves to be successful?
- What are my participants' suggestions for improving Roma children's education in Greece (policy and practice)?

In this study, success is taken as having entered higher education. As noted in the Introduction, the rationale informing my study is based on the idea that while it is widely observed that most Roma children live in poverty and remain among the lowest academic achievers in many European countries (Symeou, Luciak & Gobbo, 2009), there are some 'exceptional' cases of Roma people in Greece who have followed successful educational pathways and have been educationally successful, despite the odds. My research questions were examined through in-depth interviews with 20 Roma adults whose pathways have been successful. In the following section, I present my participants as well as issues regarding my access to them.

5.4. Participants, Sample and Access

Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose, and gain access to relevant data sources from which the researchers will generate data using their chosen methods (Mason, 2002, p. 120).

In this section, I explain how I accessed my participants and constructed my sample. "Sampling and selection are vitally important strategic elements of qualitative research" (Mason, 2002, p. 120),

although the term 'sampling' is often associated with quantitative surveys (Mason, 2002). A very difficult part of my study was negotiating access to Roma people with successful educational paths. No official data for Roma students are held by institutions of higher education in Greece because of the fact that the Roma do not represent a minority group at an official level. Thus, the Roma could be regarded as a 'hard to reach group'.

Trevor and Newburn (2001) describe 'hard to reach groups' as often being disaffected or socially vulnerable; Gypsy and traveler groups are included in their description. There are problems with the use of the notion 'hard to reach groups' because it is used inconsistently and can be misleading and potentially stigmatise some groups included in this term (Trevor & Newburn, 2001). However, the fact that in Greece the Roma are not officially regarded as a different group made it impossible for me to reach any successful individuals through official and institutional procedures. In addition, there are few Roma educated people and they are relatively dispersed. According to Trevor and Newburn (2001) numerical size is crucial in describing 'hard to reach groups'. Moreover, many Roma experience socio-economic deprivation, another key dimension for 'hard to reach groups', according to Trevor and Newburn (2001). Thus, for more than one reasons my target group can reasonably be described as 'hard to reach'.

The difficulties I confronted in accessing Roma educated people meant that I had to use many strategies to approach Roma or to approach gatekeepers/mediators who could lead me to successful Roma. Gatekeepers are "individuals or groups who control information and can grant formal or informal entry and access to the setting and participants" (Holloway, 1997, p. 77). Their gatekeeping function can be official (such as managers of an organisation) or unofficial, when they are persons "who might have no formal gatekeeping function but power and influence to grant and deny access" (ibid). By using the term gatekeepers and mediators in my research, I include all those people (or organisations), such as professors at Greek Universities, administrators at the Greek Ministry of Education, people working for NGOs and representatives of

Roma Organisations, who have facilitated my 'detecting' successful Roma.

When I started searching for participants, I contacted (mainly via mail) organisations set up for the Roma in Greece. I received only one reply from the Greek department of an international organisation which was not able to help me, as their work was mainly related to the provision of basic health care and vaccination of Roma in gypsy camps in Athens and Thessaloniki. Departments of the Greek Ministry of Education (such as those related to Intercultural Education and Research) were not able to help me either. Concurrently, I searched for professors at Greek universities who are involved in Roma education projects (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.). My Supervisor sent letters to some of them who were responsible for programmes for Roma's education in the past. Professors from the University of Thessaloniki were open to the idea of meeting me and helping me to contact some Roma students who had graduated from their university. At the same time, two of my previous Professors in Greece also helped me, one by giving me the contact details of one Roma individual and the other by introducing me to one Roma student. When I went in person to the Greek Ministry of Education, I received help from a consultant of the Ministry who introduced me to Roma organisations. Finally, my first set of participants was mainly accessed through the non-governmental organisation 'Antirropon' which advocates Roma rights in Greece and then from the non-governmental organisation 'Oikokoinwnia' which operates in northern parts of Greece.

In some cases, I used Facebook to access some participants. After having talked to one of my participants, Pericles (pseudonym for participant) on the phone, he talked to me about Patroclus (pseudonym for another participant) but explained that he could not mediate to introduce us because they were not talking to each other because of a quarrel. Thus, I contacted Patroclus through Facebook but Patroclus never replied to my Facebook message. However, when I visited their Roma camp, Patroclus was willing to be interviewed and was extremely helpful. A Greek friend I met in London had been Athena's classmate. He

did not keep in touch with her but encouraged me to find her on Facebook and contact her. Athena's first reaction was negative and quite suspicious. Eventually, we exchanged some Facebook messages before we talked on the phone and arranged a Skype interview (she lives in another European country). However, it is important to stress that my experience showed that people in Greece are not familiar with using Facebook as a means of contact especially for research purposes. In many cases, contacting in person organisations/mediators proves more effective. For instance, my access to some additional participants might have been successful if I had visited their areas in person and not only made initial contact through phone calls to mediators. However, this was not always easy because of the long distances between the areas where potential participants come from and my limited access to financial sources to conduct my fieldwork.

In my study, I intended to develop a theoretical purposive sampling approach. I took into consideration Mason's (2002) argument that researchers sample theoretically when they select to study groups or categories that are relevant to their research questions, their theoretical position and analytical framework, their analytical practice and the argument or explanation that they are developing. I intended to construct a sample which was meaningful theoretically and empirically, because it would build in certain characteristics or criteria which would help to develop my argument (Mason, 2002). I intended to find educated Roma with different features in terms of social and financial backgrounds and characteristics such as the region where they were raised. I was concerned to ensure that educated Roma women were included in my cohort, as based on my readings, I was aware that patriarchal cultural values tend to situate females in specific roles inside the Roma community (Dragonas, 2012). My initial intention was to find an equal balance of males and females. But my priority was to approach Roma who were studying or had studied at institutions of higher education.

I also had in mind that I would potentially gain better insight into my participants' stories if I interviewed more Roma people who came

from different regions. Finally, I accessed Roma who come from different Greek areas as shown in Map 5.1. Two main reasons influenced my decision to diversify the regions represented in my sample; first, different clans might live in different regions and I wanted to explore if there were any special features, practices and factors which encourage the progress of Roma into higher education related to the place and the families where they were brought up. Second, in particular in the northern parts of Greece, some Roma belong to the Muslim minority. I wanted to find educated Roma people there because I thought that their success might have been facilitated from different practices or the educational provision for the Muslim minority as explained in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.1.).



Map 5.1. Map of Greece: Areas where my Participants were Raised
(Athens, Pyrgos, Ioannina, Thessaloniki, Karditsa, Volos, Kavala)

My initial intention was to focus on young Roma people who were currently studying. However, I faced difficulties in accessing them. At the same time, I had contacted some older educated Roma. Thus, I decided to expand my sample and include educated Roma who have accessed higher education in Greece in the past. Apart from the difficulties in accessing successful Roma, another difficulty was how to approach them and ask them to participate in my study. The wording used in the first contact was crucial, as some of my potential participants might have not wanted to talk 'openly' about their Roma origin. It was important to gain their trust; that is the reason why most of the time it was useful to access a 'mediator/gatekeeper' (Holloway, 1997). In practice, the selection of my participants relied on opportunistic sampling, based on serendipitous contacts with some of the successful Roma I found, and, in the main, on snowballing techniques.

As regards my study's snowballing sampling strategy, I obtained access to some Roma people with successful educational paths, accessing participants "from one case to the next" (Flick, 2009, p. 110). After talking with my first participants who were mainly accessed through the organisation 'Antirropon', I asked them if they knew other Roma with the required characteristics. I contacted the nominated people, interviewed them and asked them to identify, if they could, further possible participants. Snowballing was suitable for my study, as my target sample members were often "involved in some kind of network with others who share the characteristic of interest" (Sturgis, 2008, p. 180); educated Roma who knew other educated Roma. However, I realised that a potential problem could be created by the fact that my sample might have included only those educated Roma within a connected network (I detail my concerns in Chapter 9, Section 9.3.1.). Therefore, I tried to access different 'networks' and gatekeepers and access educated Roma in different regions of Greece; through my networks, I attempted to find out about every potential participant.

I also had in mind that I would conduct interviews based on the criterion of theoretical saturation (Flick, 2009). Saturation occurs when

“further theoretical sampling does not uncover new ideas when researchers include additional participants” (Holloway, 1997, p. 143). On the basis of the interviews I conducted, I could argue that there were saturation points, as the same themes emerged from the analytical process.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I spent some time with three members of the organisation ‘Antirropon’ and a climate of trust was established. This was helpful in their introducing me to my first participant. At the first meetings with my first participants I felt that they needed to meet me and trust me before taking part in my research and, of course, before introducing me to other Roma. Most of my participants were willing to take part in my research following every part of my research protocol. I was reluctant to ask them to sign the Consent Form because in Greece this process is not usual as it is not followed in an official – written - way by studies conducted by Greek universities.⁵⁴ (The Information Sheet of my research is attached in Appendix 3 and the Consent Form that my participants signed is attached in Appendix 4; I gave these documents to my participants after having translated them in Greek). However, none of the participants expressed any objections to signing the form.

Most interview sessions were conducted in public places, almost always in coffee shops in Athens with the participants who lived in the Greek capital, at places that my participants chose and which were close to their houses. An exception was one case where the interview was conducted in the office where my participant works. In the area of Thessaloniki though, I visited some participants in their houses. The first time I did this was because one of my participants had a baby and thus could not leave her home. Subsequently, I visited most participants who lived in the same neighbourhood (a Roma area called Dendropotamos⁵⁵)

⁵⁴ Greek universities do not have Ethic Panels. However, when research is conducted inside the classroom, the Greek Ministry of Education must give permission (after checking the research design).

⁵⁵ This is the real name of the area. I thought that there was no meaning in using pseudonyms for Dendropotamos in Thessaloniki and Agia Varvara in Athens as they are

in their homes. I was concerned about visiting my participants' homes because, according to my Ethical Application (that followed my University's regulations) which had been approved (see Appendix 5), I had to conduct the interviews in public places. However, in situ, I decided to go to my participants' houses in order to conduct the interviews which might have not been possible otherwise. At this point, I need to stress that an additional danger I felt when I decided to conduct these interviews inside the camp related to some tension that existed at that time between the Roma of Dendropotamos and the police. However, I decided to go in spite of this in order to meet the interviewees. In some cases, I had to be driven to bus and train stations by some participants and mediators because of transportation issues in some areas. However, I never felt in danger. Moreover, I think it would be unreasonable to have asked my participants to trust me and talk about their lives if I had not even dared to visit their camp/house, enter their car etc.

Two participants living at a distance were interviewed through Skype. The average duration of the research interviews was two and a half hours. However, some interviews were very short, such as Paris' interview and Hector's interview which lasted about 80 minutes each, while some others were very long, such as Laertes' interview which lasted for three and a half hours. The interviews were conducted in August and September 2012, July and August 2013, December 2013, January 2014 and May 2014, on days and times which were convenient for my participants. The dispersion of the dates above indicates how difficult it was to access potential participants.⁵⁶

both well-known Roma areas and, in most cases, it is easy to recognise these areas when my participants refer to them. Moreover, I took into account the significance of locality issues, because living in locales, such as the aforementioned ones, where the Roma, in general, live in good conditions (Markou, 2008), facilitated some participants' educational success. Locality issues are discussed in the data chapters (see Section 6.5. in Chapter 6 and Section 8.4.1.4. in Chapter 8).

⁵⁶ A special story relates to Hippocrates' case. I contacted Hippocrates through a gatekeeper in summer 2013 but Hippocrates said he would be away for a long holiday. (My sense was that Hippocrates was trying to avoid taking part in my study). Six months later, when I was in Athens (around Christmas time), I passed outside his clinic by chance. When I saw his name on the label, I decided to enter and talk to him. He

Table 5.1. presents my participants – I have chosen to use Ancient Greek names as pseudonyms for them - their gender and some basic information about their studies and current occupation. I need to note that all the participants took part in my study on a voluntary basis. Appendix 6 briefly outlines some basic information about each participant.

Here, I need to add that, during my contacts with non-governmental organisations and with educated Roma, I met people who were introduced to me as appropriate for my research but who could not have been directly included in my sample because they had not continued into higher education. However, the fact that some Roma people without a university degree were regarded by the Roma community as educated, more than other Roma at the same educational level, made me realise that their stories would be useful. At the same time, I recognised that these cases which were presented to me as successful could inform my conceptualisation of success for my study. Thus, I decided to conduct a complementary group of interviews with people whose stories could help my understanding of the educational success of Roma in more depth. Moreover, during the initial steps of my fieldwork, some Roma people who had continued into further education were introduced to me. However, for my thesis, I subsequently decided only to focus on those Roma who entered higher education, when I found some more participants of higher education. Table 5.2. presents some other Roma adults who have been interviewed during my data collection, although these data are not included in my thesis because, eventually, I focused on those Roma in higher education.

My choice on which data to include in order to construct my thesis' argument was not easy. Although the exclusion of those participants who have not entered higher education seemed easier, it was more difficult for me to take some other decisions such as whether to include Hector in my sample. Hector is a Muslim Roma who described himself as Muslim (and not Roma) although he agreed to take part in my study. His conscious

accepted to participate and some weeks later, we booked a meeting on a holiday (because his clinic was closed on that day).

Name	Gender	Age ⁵⁷	Type of Studies	Occupation
Alcmene	F	25	Philology	She gives Greek language lessons - Mediator (programme for Roma's education)
Antigone	F	25	Political Sciences	Mediator (programme for Roma's education)
Athena	F	35	Nursing	Nurse
Demosthenes	M	20	Engineering	Student
Electra	F	20	Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies	Student
Hector	M	25	Finance	Military Service
Hippocrates	M	50	Medicine	Doctor
Ifigeneia	F	35	Law	Politician
Iphicles	M	25	Engineering	Student
Ismene	F	25	Finance	She works at an employment agency
Jason	M	30	Translation	Student - Mediator (programme for Roma's education)
Laertes	M	30	Law	Lawyer
Miltiades	M	40	Molecular Microbiology	He works for a pharmaceutical company abroad
Nestor	M	55	Sociology	He is conducting his PhD in Roma issues; involved in Roma programmes
Paris	M	20	Accounting	Student - Mediator (programme for Roma's education)
Patroclus	M	25	Accounting	Student
Pericles	M	25	Social Administration	Student
Pylades	M	20	Social Anthropology	Student
Theaetetus	M	35	Theology	Priest-Monk
Theagenes	M	20	Engineering	Student

Table 5.1. Research Participants

⁵⁷ In order to protect my participants' personal information, I have rounded off their age.

participation in my research led me to include him in my participants, although I recognise that it is his minority identity (and not the Roma background) which predominates in the way he described himself.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Type of Institution	Profession
Menelaos	Male	50	Secondary Education (lower high school)	Active at a Roma organisation, Ex Political Representative at a local level, Trader
Achilleas	Male	40	Secondary Education	Representative at a local level, Mediator at a Programme for Roma children
Rea	Female	20	Secondary Education (general high school) secondary professional school	Esthetician
Glafki	Female	25	Secondary Education	(Housewife)
Lefkothea	Female	25	Further Education (IEK)/Nursing	Works at a hospital
Aias	Male	45	Further Education (Religious School/ Byzantine Music)	Works at Insurance and Investment Company

Table 5.2. Roma Adults Who Had Been Suggested as Potential Research Participants (Complementary Set of Interviews)

Before I finish this section, it is worth noting that some potential participants did not agree to take part in my study. For example, while being in Northern Greece, I met in person a Roma male who was a

university graduate; he did not take part in my study, explaining that he was busy. In addition, I visited a clothes shop whose owner's children have entered university. The owner's son was there at the time. He explained to me that he had dropped out from his technical higher institution. However, his sister was a postgraduate student abroad. As I knew her name, I e-mailed her about my study. She replied that she was busy and thus she did not want to be interviewed. In addition, I found a gatekeeper in an area in Northern Greece (Serres) who wanted to facilitate my study. However, when I talked to potential participants on the phone, they were not willing to be interviewed.

5.5. Interviewing: Data Collection

In this section, I describe how I collected my data through the in-depth interviews I conducted. I detail the process followed and I outline the impediments I met.

In an interview conversation, the researcher “asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world, about their dreams, fears and hopes” (Kvale, 2007 p. 1). The researcher hears the interviewees’ views and opinions “in their own words, and learns about their school and work situation, their family and social life” (ibid). Today, in our ‘interview society’, interviewing is the most widely used technique for conducting systematic social inquiry by the mass media, human service providers, and researchers who treat interviews as their ‘windows on the world’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). The research interview is a professional conversation; “an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1).

I considered interviewing as a process of knowledge construction following Kvale’s & Brinkmann’s (2009) “traveler metaphor”; a conception understanding interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of

knowledge construction, with an emphasis on the narrative to be told to an audience. In the traveler metaphor the interviewer is:

a traveler on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home ... The interviewer-traveler ... walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world ... The potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveler's interpretations of the narratives he or she brings back to home audiences. The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveler might change as well. The journey might instigate a process of reflection that leads the traveler to new ways of self-understanding, as well as uncovering previously taken-for-granted values and customs in the traveler's home country (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 48-49).

In my study, I conducted twenty in-depth interviews, "seeking 'deep' information and knowledge" (Johnson, 2001, p. 104), in order to give my participants the chance to express themselves 'uniquely' regarding their educational experiences and pathways. In-depth interviewing is described as a "flexible and free-flowing interaction" (Morris, 2015, p. 3) where the participants are expected to "tell their story in their own words" (ibid). According to Newby (2014, p. 360), "in-depth interviews provide an opportunity for a detailed exploration of an issue". Through in-depth interviews, researchers are enabled to "explore in detail the experiences, motives, and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives others than their own" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 3). In-depth interviews also allow the interviewer to get "below the surface" and "explore the factors that underpin participants' answers: their values, past experiences, circumstances, reasoning, feelings, opinions and beliefs" (Yeo et al., 2014, p. 184).

My fieldwork began with a pilot interview. According to Yin (2011, p. 37), "pilot studies help to test and refine one or more aspects of a final study". Pilot studies can include "qualitative examinations of the questions, and a small sample of respondents can be interviewed using what is intended to be the form of the interview schedule" (Keates, 2000, p. 76). In addition, pilot studies help the researcher to develop an "understanding of the concepts and theories held" by the people studied

(Maxwell, 2005, p. 58). It provides the researcher with an understanding of “the meaning that these phenomena and events have for the people who are involved in them, and the perspectives that inform their actions” (ibid).

One of my participants (Demosthenes) was interviewed and feedback was provided for me from him about the interview questions. Access was gained through a Greek professor of mine who had informed her undergraduate students about my doctoral thesis; one of her students ‘mediated’ for me to meet her Roma friend. This pilot interview was useful for me to gain preliminary data, as well as “helping in understanding (myself) as a researcher” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 57). This process provided my first contact with Roma who had accessed tertiary education, giving me a better understanding of my topic. This pilot interview is included in my data, but mainly helped me to improve my interview schedule and plan a more detailed one with many and more specific questions and probes. In the end of the interview I also collected some basic demographic information for each participant (For my Interview Schedule, see Appendix 7). I used this detailed Interview Schedule for some male participants. Demosthenes was interviewed again during my main phase of data collection.

The interviews were organised around the following six themes: higher studies; family background/childhood experiences; school life; concept of success; career/workplace (experiences, aspirations); suggestions for the improvement of educational provision for Roma. Identity issues were repeatedly raised by my participants and appeared of importance in the way they described themselves in relation to their educational success. Thus, I added identity as a topic that I introduced in the later interviews when the participants did not raise it themselves. In most cases, I introduced the basic themes and my participants started to talk about their pathways in a free way. This resulted in my having access to many deep and vivid narrative accounts.

My interviews were based on a series of themes starting with their present status and then encouraging them to talk about their educational pathways. Some of my participants (such as Nestor and Laertes) stated that they had been interviewed by other researchers studying Roma issues and they had control of the interview as they were experienced and familiar with the interview process. For example, they started by telling me that they would talk in a more free way where they would narrate their stories and then I could ask them questions on issues not covered. In these cases, I chose to let my participants follow their personal style, as “the particular individual is of paramount importance in determining both the content and the style of the interview” (Keates, 2000, p. 3). Moreover, their answers seemed to reflect the characteristics of what Rubin and Rubin (2012, pp. 102-107) attribute to the good answers of the responsive interviewing model: depth and detail, vividness, nuance and richness.

I tried to meet each of my participants before the interview session and/or dedicated considerable time during our ‘interview meeting’ in order to explain my research. In those cases where I met my participants only once, I talked to my participants in advance on the phone about my research and the arrangements for our meeting. My participants were aware of my topic because, each time, the previous participant or people from ‘Antirropon’ had explained my purpose and had asked for permission in order to pass on their contact details. When it was possible, I sent my participants the Information Sheet for Participants via e-mail. Where this was not possible, we discussed this matter before the formal interview. In many cases, we talked about the research on the phone when I called them to arrange the interview meeting. In some cases, such as Athena’s case, the phone call lasted for more than an hour and the participant had already talked extensively about her life before the interview.

In my interviews, three phases can be recognised (Keates, 2000): the opening, the development of the main themes, and the conclusion or release. Taking into consideration Keates’ (2000, p. 22) advice according

to which “what takes place in the opening phase sets the stage for what follows, so it is important to make sure that it begins well”, I attempted to create a supportive climate at the beginning of the interview meeting. The fact that I conducted most interviews in cafés contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere. In the beginning, I thanked my participants for their cooperation and I reminded them that the interviews would be anonymised and confidential. Furthermore, I repeated that the audio-recording of the interviews would be helpful for me and that they had the right to withdraw at any time or ask for the recording to be stopped. I also paid attention to the way the interview was wound down. Both the interviewer and the participant should, according to Keates (2000, p. 25), “be able to go away feeling that they have participated in a satisfying experience that was worthwhile”. To help create that sense of reciprocal satisfaction, I “alert[ed] my participants that the interview was coming to its close” (Keates, 2000, p. 25) when introducing the final themes. I asked them if there was anything further they felt should have been discussed (Keates, 2000) and thanked them again for sharing their experiences with me, for their time and their cooperation.

Having in mind Kvale’s (2007, p. 56) argument that the live interview situation “provides ... richer access to the subject’s meanings than the transcribed texts will do later on”, after each interview, I tried to set aside some time in order to make notes on my immediate impressions and thoughts raised by each interview. I followed this practice thinking that my immediate impressions from my “access to the meanings communicated in the live interview interaction may be valuable for the analysis of transcripts” (Kvale, 2007, p. 56). Some respondents were more open when the interview ended, such as Theaetetus. According to Warren (2012, p. 139), even after the interview has ‘officially’ ended, “the interaction may be prolonged – especially if turning off the tape recorder frees the respondent from the fear of being ‘on the record’”. In most cases, interview-meetings lasted longer than the interview because, especially at the end and without the recorder on, some of my participants felt free to express more ideas and personal experiences.

That is an additional reason why I made notes right after the interviews. However, respecting the fact that they talked about some topics when the recorder was off, I did not include these pieces of information in my data. (In some cases, such as in Laertes' interview and Pylades' interview, my participants asked to discuss some issues off the record). These accounts helped me to better understand aspects of their self and in some cases aspects of their successful educational pathways.

I should also state that in the beginning of my study, I was concerned about the number of interviews I needed from each of my participants. Initially, I had planned to conduct two interviews: a) a first session with a focus on my participant's life story and b) a second session as a follow-up. Difficulties in accessing my participants in relation to the fact that they lived in different parts of Greece discouraged me from attempting this. Moreover, as I detail in Chapter 9 (Section 9.3.1.), in some cases, I felt that some participants might have taken part in my study because people that they respected, such as university professors, mediated. Thus, these participants might have not been willing to be interviewed again and again. However, some participants stated that they were willing to meet me again if needed and kept my contact details in case they wanted to contact me again for my research (e.g. if I needed some more information as a follow-up) but they mostly expressed the idea that they would contact me in case they felt that they had omitted something important.

Following Farrimond's (2013, p. 69) approach according to which, "doing data analysis with integrity may also include involving the participants themselves", after the transcription of each interview, I e-mailed each transcript to each participant in case they wanted to double-check, add or remove anything. (I did this for those participants who had e-mail addresses). None of them commented on the transcripts. However, Alcmene and Athena did send me additional comments on topics we discussed (Alcmene e-mailed me and Athena sent me a

Facebook post).⁵⁸ My participants told me that they liked the idea of my study and expressed an expectation that it would contribute to the improvement of Roma education in Greece. Moreover, most of them said they would be interested in accessing a final report and some of them complained about the fact that they have participated in studies in the past without ever finding out about the results. After the submission of my thesis, I plan to e-mail my participants to inform them that my project is complete, I will thank them again for their participation and I will include a link leading to my thesis through my university's e-theses services. I will also be available to meet them and discuss my findings.

All the interviews were audio-recorded.⁵⁹ The interviews were conducted in Greek. In the early stages of the interview process, it was important for me to gain a thorough understanding of the Greek Roma's cultural background. I made sure to learn as much as possible about Roma 'diversity' (such as identity issues, terminology preferred) because "cultural differences can easily lead to communication difficulties and to misinterpretation" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 118). On the whole, I was familiar with many Roma issues as I had already addressed this field in my Master's dissertation (Gkofa, 2011). Moreover, I had completed a first draft of my literature review before entering the field.

5.6. Coding and Analysis

In this section, I discuss coding and analysis as important means of organising and giving meaning to the data collected. The process of transcribing, coding and analysing the data will be systematically examined and elucidated.

⁵⁸ After the interviews some participants added me on Facebook and we are linked this way, although we do not keep in touch.

⁵⁹ Pericles commented on the audio-recording process by saying that my study is very important and that video-recording would probably be a better choice. However, I think that audio-recording helps the participants feel more comfortable than video-recording which could make them feel concerned about their anonymity. Pericles seemed to believe that this study could have a broader use, such as the presentation of these educationally successful Roma participants as positive examples in public.

Initially the recorded interviews were transcribed into text in Greek. I stayed as close as I could to my participants' words by attempting to write down what my participants said and the way they have said it. However, I skipped some pauses or words like "um" and "er" in order to make the transcript more readable and concise. All the interview sessions were fully transcribed and then thoroughly checked by re-reading the text and cross-checking the recorded data on my computer for any omissions and mistakes. This approach accommodated corrections. Initially, I wrote numbers next to each time the interviewer and the participant said something: for example, Researcher 1 for the first time I spoke, Participant 1 for the first time the participant spoke; Researcher 2 for the second time I spoke, Participant 2 for the second time the participant spoke (see extract of Nestor's interview in Appendix 8).⁶⁰ I found this way of counting helpful when I had to translate pieces of data into English, such as the direct quotes used in this thesis, because the 'numbers' stayed the same in the original interview in Greek and the translated version in English. This process would have been more complex if I had followed other ways of counting, such as using numbers for each line of the interview as the text (length) would be different in English and in Greek and I would have faced difficulties in referring directly to specific extracts. In this final thesis, when I quote directly my participants' words, I use the name of the participant (in italics) and the number next to the name indicates when the participant made this comment during the interview.

I coded each interview following a process of open coding. During open coding, "data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Each interview was coded in this way in order to locate structures, patterns, differences and common themes. After reading each interview transcript, first, I underlined the interesting ideas raised and made

⁶⁰ I use extracts from Nestor's interview in Appendix 8. I did not attach a whole interview in the Appendices because it would have been extremely difficult to protect my participant's identity as well as the identities of other people mentioned because detailed events and names of the people involved are cited.

relevant notes in the margins. I gave emphasis to insightful ideas and ideas which were consistent with or opposite to my readings. Then, I organised these ideas into themes. I followed Strauss and Corbin's (1998, p. 102) argument that "events, happenings, objects, and actions/interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning are grouped under more abstract concepts termed categories". Thus, in each interview, I grouped the ideas, events and actions which were similar under more abstract categories, which "have analytic power because they have the potential to explain and predict" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Next, I underscored common themes or issues that arose from my participants. The themes I used derived mainly from three sources: a) from theory, such as the notion of success, b) from aspects of the literature review, such as issues related to educational provision and c) from the data themselves through my participants' stories. This process was realised manually.

All my participants focused on their personal experiences; however, some of the views they expressed about terminology and education at large, including the importance of education for Roma children's progress, were similar. Thus, I grouped together the common themes reported. Some parts of this process of coding and analysis were descriptive of my participants' experiences and ideas, such as those related to the factors which encouraged my participants' progress in education. However, some other parts were more analytical; this analytic sense is related to "making comparisons along the level of properties and dimensions" and in ways that allow the analyst to "break the data apart and reconstruct them to form an interpretive scheme" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 65). During the process of coding and analysis, I kept my research questions in mind; however, many issues arose which were not directly related to them, such as my participants' feelings concerning their pathways.

The coding and analysis process was undertaken using the Greek transcripts. However, I translated two interviews in English and I worked on pieces of them in order to be able to discuss the data as well as the

coding and analysis process with my supervisor. I attach the following Appendices in English in order to show the way I analysed my data. An example of the way I coded Nestor's interview is attached in Appendix 9; Appendix 10 presents extracts from the Summary of Nestor's Interview in English; Appendix 11 shows how I summarised Nestor's key accounts of success on the basis of my research questions. Appendix 12 presents an example of the way I grouped my participants' accounts regarding one success factor (the influence of Role Models on Roma students' educational success). Appendix 13 presents a table which summarises some factors which contributed to the educational success of my participants, according to their accounts. The next section presents some language issues which were raised in my research.

5.7. Language Issues

First, I should point out that I anticipated confronting some linguistic issues because of the fact that I conducted the interviews in Greek but I have written my thesis in English. For instance, from the beginning of my research, I was concerned about which term to use in order to describe my target group. There are differences between the two languages (Greek and English) and I considered this a challenge in writing and in explaining my thesis. Indeed, I found it beneficial to be able to critically consider some language-related issues based on international literature (such as the use of the terms 'Roma', 'Gypsy', 'Tsigganos').

As far as the data analysis is concerned, in practice, I conducted most of the analysis in Greek (working with the Greek transcripts). This enabled me to work with the original data and the vocabulary of my participants. At the same time, this was helpful for practical reasons as I saved the time and energy required to translate the interviews into English - after the transcription work. As a result, I was able to focus more on the analysis of the data than on the linguistic differences in general.

The use of these two languages in the context of my thesis resulted in the following difficulties: in some cases, during the interviews,

my participants used some Greek terms which were not always possible to translate precisely into English. In these cases, I have used footnotes to explain these differences. For instance, as explained in Chapter 8 (section 8.2.), I deployed the term ‘education’ (ekpaideush/εκπαίδευση) in order to make the point that most participants emphasised the significance of academic progression and (typical) education for the Roma. However, in some cases, my participants referred to education by using Greek terms which go beyond schooling and training and relate to a person’s wider intellectual development and internal cultivation (such as paideia/παιδεία and kalliergeia/καλλιέργεια).

5.8. Methodological Reflections

5.8.1. Ethical Considerations

This research study was carried out with Ethical Approval from King’s College London (The Social Sciences, Humanities & Law Research Ethics Subcommittee: Education & Management Research Ethics Panel, REP(EM)/11/12-61 ‘Successful educational paths among students from disadvantaged groups: the case of Roma/Gypsies in Greece’) (Letter of Approval: Appendix 5). I followed all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research. My research was also conducted according to the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011).

Consent, confidentiality and trust are key issues in the research ethical guidelines (Ryen, 2011). According to Oliver (2003), the researcher should protect the research participants by treating them fairly and ensuring their “peace of mind” (Oliver, 2003, p. 46). According to Iphofen (2009, p. 4), a responsible researcher is one “who understands and examines the ways in which the moral and the methodological principles of their work are interwoven”.

In this research, I was aware of ethical issues that could be raised during the interviews. ‘No harm to my participants’ was my main

consideration because, although the participants were approached as successful Roma cases, I recognised that they would probably be able to recall unpleasant events or perhaps they would feel uncomfortable to talk about personal issues. I was aware of the “power asymmetry between the researcher and the subject” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 33) during the interviews, and in particular that there are power relationships and gender issues which could affect the interview process. For example, I knew that some of my participants would be younger than me, undergraduate students attending Greek universities or other institutions of higher education while I am a post-graduate student abroad. Gender differences might also have influenced the way some participants participated in the interview. For instance, when I interviewed my female participants, they all seemed very comfortable to open up and talk to me even about very personal issues. Our age proximity facilitated these interviews as well. This was not the case with all my male participants. In addition, there were some unexpected conditions which I could not have taken into consideration earlier. For instance, at the end of each interview, I used to ask my participants if there was anything which had made them feel uncomfortable. Theaetetus, who is a priest monk, said that he found it difficult to sit next to me - a female researcher - for many hours.

Being aware of ethical issues that might have been raised during the interviews, I believe that my participants were not at risk during the interview. In some cases, I was asked to stop the recorder, as some participants, such as Laertes and Demosthenes, wanted to share some events with me off the record and they did not want them to be written down. However, in order to minimise any possible risks raised by their feeling discomfort about recalling unpleasant events or perhaps their feeling uncomfortable because of sensitive topics raised, I reminded my participants that all the data produced would be anonymised and confidential. Furthermore, I did not insist on receiving answers and I reminded my participants of their right to withdraw.

In some cases, some of my questions may have triggered memories which might have been forgotten, or maybe even hidden,

because they were hurtful. For instance, Theaetetus recalled an event of discrimination outside his area (the event I detail in Chapter 6, Section 6.5) after my direct question about any events of discrimination he might have experienced. He said (*Theaetetus*, 95): ‘Now it (just) came to my mind...’. Taking into account the intense character of the discriminatory practices described in his example, I could argue that in some cases, some experiences might have been traumatic for some participants and thus, they might have been repressed⁶¹ for years. However, some of these memories might have resurfaced during the interviews and this concerned me in terms of ethics, as some participants might have felt distressed at some points. For example, Pylades cried as he recalled events of discrimination (rejection from a Roma girl with whom he was in love because of his disability). In this case, I stopped the interview twice in order to protect my participant from feeling uncomfortable or upset.

Some of my participants (such as Nestor and Ifigeneia) informed me that they had no problem with revealing their real identity. However, I decided to use pseudonyms for all my participants and to disguise their features in order to protect other people that they mentioned. I wanted to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the data of any other participants who were concerned about these issues. I should point out that some of my participants refer to each other during the interviews and thus, I wanted to be sure that their identities would not be revealed even through other participants’ words.

I believe that my participants enjoyed sharing their experiences with me and they might have better understood their past experiences, as they discovered deeper meaning in their lives through “the process of reflecting and putting the events, experiences, and feelings that (they) have lived into oral expression” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 1). Indeed, in many cases, some participants said they enjoyed having been interviewed for

⁶¹ Repression is a “personality mechanism –unknown to the person- which keeps anxiety-laden memories from reaching conscious awareness” (Isaacson & Hutt, 1971, p. 352). To put it simply, in Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, repression is a defence mechanism which refers to pushing away unwanted ideas and keeping them out of the conscious mind (Barker, 2003).

my project. In addition, they might have better understood their future expectations. An additional benefit was that they participated in a research that will hopefully contribute to the improvement of educational policy concerning Roma education in Greece. As I mentioned above, before the first interview, I contacted my participants and I informed them about my research. I provided them with an Information Sheet (Appendix 3) and a Consent Form (Appendix 4). These documents were given to my Roma participants in Greek. In order to ensure that I was not disrupting participants' lives more than the minimum required to do the interviews, I was flexible regarding the times, dates and places of the interviews, giving them as wide a choice as possible for me to accommodate to their lives. As mentioned in Section 5.4., in some cases, I had to visit my participants' camps and homes in order to meet them and conduct the interviews.

5.8.2. My Role as Researcher, Issues of Positionality and Reflexivity

"Who you are (or are becoming) determines to a large extent what and how you research" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 22). This argument highlights the effects that the researcher can have on his/her research, issues that implicitly or explicitly have already been raised in the previous sections, particularly in the latter part. In terms of gender, age, culture, religion etc., I understood the effect that my positionality might have on my research. Therefore, I gave emphasis to the need for "morally responsible research behavior" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p. 74). Having in mind that I was the main instrument for gaining knowledge through the interviews, my "moral integrity, sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p. 74) were of great importance.

Furthermore, reflexivity was a priority for me. Robson (2002, p. 551) describes reflexivity as "the process of researchers reflecting upon their actions and values during research and the effects that they may have". Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 6) go further to describe this term in the context of empirical research as "interpretation of

interpretation". Reflexivity involves being "attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of one's own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voices of those one interviews and those to whom one reports" (Patton, 2002, p. 65). I have taken into consideration that the reflexive researcher "looks through a critical lens at the process, context, and outcomes of research and interrogates the construction of knowledge" (Finlay, 2012, p. 317). In my study, I employed reflexivity "as explicit, self-aware reflection and analysis toward increasing richness and integrity of understanding" (Finlay, 2012, p. 317). When I was in the field, after each interview, I made notes and tried to focus on what I could have done better and re-think the process of the interview in order to recognise any omissions or mistakes and improve my research techniques.

Throughout the interview process, I attempted to identify possible areas of bias in my participants' responses. In most cases, I felt that my participants were sincere. However, there were pieces of information provided or views expressed which were a challenge for me, such as generalisations, like Nestor's view that education is very important for all the Roma, as I was not convinced that this was always the case. In this study, it was important for me to gain a deep understanding of my Roma participants' experiences. In some cases, I shared some elements of my own background, such as my previous experience in Roma schools, which I thought would contribute to a climate of trust.

In the field, I faced imponderables that I had not taken into consideration in advance. In particular, I met an 'elite' educated Roma woman. "Elites generally have more knowledge, money, and status and assume a higher position than others in the population" (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002, p. 299). This educated Roma woman was wealthy and influential in political circles. My participant could be considered an 'elite' case not only among the Roma but, in general, in non-Roma terms. However, when I contacted her, through one of my participants, I was not aware of her status, power and privilege. When I met her, I found out about her activities. My general methodological readings on interviewing

elites helped me conduct this interview (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). My participant emphasised her family's high status and underlined her family's important intergenerational role in championing Roma rights. My participant's consciousness of her 'elite' features resulted in her doubting the suitability of her case to be directly included in my target group of potential participants. Despite her highlighting her Roma identity, I believe that her sense of distance between herself and most Roma cases, at least as the Roma cases are often described on the basis of traditional characteristics, made her talk in a very sincere and sometimes severe way about the Roma; a fact which was useful for my understanding of features of the Roma community in general. Our age proximity contributed to a familiar climate.

I was also aware that my non-Roma origin could be considered by some participants as an obstacle for me to understand their experiences. My attempt to approach Roma mediators (or gatekeepers) first was helpful for that purpose and my first meeting with my mediators contributed to a climate of trust. As explained in Section 5.4., I attempted to identify and approach Roma graduates and Roma students mainly through the Greek Ministry of Education, Roma organisations in Greece, Greek professors who have conducted research on Roma Education in Greece and the registry offices of Greek universities. These people knew some Roma students and Roma graduates and could introduce me to them. In practice, some of my first participants also worked as 'mediators' for my study because they introduced me to other Roma people that they knew. Because of the fact that I knew that Roma Mediators⁶² worked at the programme «Εκπαίδευση των παιδιών Ρομά» [“Education of Roma

⁶² The Council of Europe has adopted measures where “individuals with a Roma background ... are trained and hired to act as mediators between the Roma and public institutions” (Kyuchukov, 2012, p. 375). “Mediation is one of the measures used across Europe to tackle the inequalities that Roma face in terms of access to employment, healthcare services and quality education” (Kyuchukov, 2012, p. 375).

children”] conducted (until 2013) by Greek universities, I contacted Greek Professors involved in this programme.⁶³

During my first meetings with people from Roma organisations and Roma participants, I felt that our roles were reversed, as I ‘participated as an interviewee in an interview-conversation’ conducted by them. They wanted to examine my research purpose and aspects of my personality and they wanted to be sure about my intentions before introducing me to potential participants. I felt that my origin from a region near to where many Roma live, my professional identity as a primary teacher combined with the fact that I have been to ‘gypsy schools’ before encouraged my participants to talk to me openly. Despite my fears that my participants might have had negative experiences from school or from some teachers, I had in mind that primary teachers in Greece, as shown from Mylonas’ (1998) research, are widely perceived as honest people who offer a very important service to society and receive respect from others. In addition, it made sense to hypothesise that this profession’s status is high for the Roma community (where being educated is not the usual case). Furthermore, in Greece, it is widely believed that most teachers do not come from advantaged backgrounds. Moreover, it is not a well-paid profession. Thus, it is believed that people who are teachers mostly care sincerely about children and education. This might have resulted in Roma participants’ being less suspicious about my aims; a fact which is important when considering Rantis’ (2008) argument that Roma distrust towards those who approach them for their (the Roma’s) good.

However, sometimes I felt that my non-Roma origin might have provoked a sense of distance between my participants and myself. I consider this sense of distance, because of our not coming from the same community group, as a potential advantage and less as a drawback in conducting the interviews; as Miller & Glassner, (2004, p. 132) argue:

⁶³ As explained in Chapter 8 (Section 8.4.1.11.), some of my participants (such as Laertes, Alcmene, Paris and Jason) are Mediators at this programme.

One potential benefit of social distances in research ... is that the interviewee can recognise him - or herself as an expert on a topic of interest to someone typically in a more powerful position vis-à-vis the social structure (in this case, particularly in terms of age, race, and education). To find oneself placed in this position can be both empowering and illuminating because one can reflect on and speak about one's life in ways not often available. When individuals are members of groups that have been stereotyped and devalued by the larger culture, and whose perspectives have been ignored ... , the promise of this approach is all the more apparent.

I strongly believe that my participants felt like 'experts' who helped me understand their stories. In addition, because of the fact that their community is negatively stereotyped in Greece, these interviews worked for them as a chance to talk about some of these prejudices (e.g. that the Roma undervalue education) and discount them. Furthermore, I believe that the nature of my topic, which emphasised their successful pathways, helped them to talk in a more open way, feeling that their cases could be presented as positive examples which could potentially inspire younger Roma.

5.9. Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined and described the methodological processes involved in my study. While my approach might be subject to limitations, some of which are developed in chapter 9 (Section 9.3.), it was the most suitable in order to accomplish my research aims and objectives. The qualitative approach I followed gave me the opportunity to gain a variety of insights into the personal experiences of the educated Roma in Greece. I demonstrated caution on the basis of cultural concerns in both the collection of data and its analysis as my study explored an aspect of the education of an already vulnerable community in Greek society. Efforts were made to understand the complexity of the participants' backgrounds and to protect their identities. I now turn to the first chapter of data analysis, which offers detailed accounts of my Roma participants' successful educational pathways as expressed in the interviews.

Chapter 6. Factors in the Educational Success of Greek Roma

6.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the interview data of the twenty Greek Roma who participated in my study focusing on the key factors that they believe account for their educational success. During my data coding and analysis, I identified some key influences which were repeatedly reported by my participants as having had an impact on their educational progression. The influences discussed in the following sections are not the only ones identified by the participants but are the most relevant in terms of addressing my first research question regarding the factors which facilitate the educational success of Greek Roma.

The influences I explore in this chapter have been grouped into the following clusters:

- Influences of family/home on educational success
- Influences of school on educational success
- Influences of community on educational success
- Influences of locality issues on educational success
- Influences of individual and circumstantial issues on educational success

During the interviews, my participants detailed their educational pathways. Although the participants' backgrounds varied in terms of socioeconomics, gender, age and the local area they come from, in some cases similar educational experiences that contributed to their success were reported. In the following sections, I include selected extracts from the research interviews which best illustrate these factors identified in the participants' educational experiences. Before I turn to each cluster of influences, I need to clarify that in some cases,

there is some overlap between the clusters. However, I present them separately here for reasons of clarity.

6.2. Influences of Family/Home on Educational Success

Almost all my participants attributed a great part of their educational success to family factors. In this section, I discuss two key themes related to the family's impact on my participants' educational success that were evident in all twenty interviews: first, the family's economic capital, and, second, the familial attitudes towards education.

6.2.1. Influences of Economic Capital

One of the key themes identified in my data analysis is the influence of economic capital as a factor in educational success. In this section, I summarise my findings in terms of the impact of my participants' economic capital as explained in their accounts of their educational success – mainly through two groups of participants who differ from each other in terms of their financial background: wealthy participants and poorer ones. I start with this theme as my participants' familial economic background does not only appear as a success factor per se but also seems to relate to some of the other themes presented later in this chapter.

Economic capital is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 16). The financial resources available to my Roma participants are of importance, especially because the overwhelming majority of Roma households in Greece have an income that is much lower than the poverty line in Greece (for more details see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). Although, at the end of each interview, I introduced some questions about family income (see Appendix 7), in most cases,

my participants characterised their families' financial situation and the conditions of their upbringing and adult lives in a more descriptive way, positioning themselves mostly as low-income, intermediate or wealthy. Obviously, the description of their familial financial situation by my participants is relative and contestable; however, it is important to explore if and how money matters in Roma's educational success. In particular, 'binary' cases of wealthy and low-income participants highlight the impact the money may have had on educational progression. Table 6.1. presents my participants on the basis of their financial situation, according to their self-reporting.

The Roma participants who described themselves as wealthy and lived in better conditions, such as living in a house, recognised that their access to financial resources had played a role in their trajectory of success. Access to money, living in a permanent residence (with water and electricity), being able to 'invest' in education had facilitated these participants' educational pathways. For example, according to Theagenes, his family was quite well off and did not need to send their children to work. Electra explicitly attributed a part of her progression to her family's 'good' financial situation (*Electra*, 41, 42):

If our financial situation had not been good ... and if we had no food to eat, perhaps there would have been a need for us to stop going to school and work instead ... That is why my father used to travel abroad (as a driver); to make sure that we can have everything...

In many of my participants' cases, the family's financial situation seems to correlate with their children's educational progression. According to Demosthenes, it is difficult for children coming from poor Roma families living in huts to continue in education. Demosthenes said (*Demosthenes*, 18):

Even if the state offers some support, if Roma parents do not want (their children to continue into school) and in addition their financial situation is not good, nothing can happen. It (educational progression) depends on the area (you live), your financial condition and your will to go on. And it also has to do

with what you want for your life... If you want to be like the others or not...

However, although money seems to matter, the educational progression of my participants cannot be simply explained on an economic basis. In particular, the cases of these successful participants from poorer backgrounds indicate that any attempt to understand my participants' educational progression is complex. This was eloquently highlighted by Hippocrates who explained that, although money is an issue, it is not the only factor affecting the educational progression of Roma; what he calls 'mentality' also plays a role (e.g. the custom of early marriages). Hippocrates argues that the better financial situation of those Roma who live in Agia Varvara did not necessarily result in educational progression. In contrast, according to Hippocrates, traditional Roma customs, such as early marriages, still continue to shape younger Roma's lives as much as economic advantage.

Although in this section I focus on economic prosperity as a factor in Roma's educational success, the following part reveals the additional difficulties some participants confronted in their pathways because of their family's poor living conditions.

Pericles talked of the financial sacrifices his family made in order for him to be able to enter university. He noted that his father had stopped smoking for some time in order to save money for his expenses. He highlighted the way his housing conditions affected his studies. First, he referred to the difficulties he experienced when studying while living in their hut. Later on, his family got a state-funded prefabricated house. This is how Pericles described the impact this housing change had on his educational progression (*Pericles*, 405):

When I was at primary school, we used to live in a hut ... at some point, the state gave 84 houses (to Roma) here and we got one because we were a family with four children ... This event facilitated my educational pathway as I had a place to study ... Before that, I could not study ... When it was rainy, I could hear the rain ... We were six people in the hut and I

could not concentrate ... Thus, I used to sit in my father's car and study there...

Participant	Gender	Financial Situation described by participants
1. Hippocrates	M	Wealthy
2. Patroclus	M	Wealthy
3. Demosthenes	M	Wealthy
4. Theagenes	M	Wealthy
5. Ifigeneia	F	Wealthy
6. Alcmene	F	Wealthy
7. Electra	F	Wealthy
8. Miltiades	M	Intermediate/wealthy
9. Nestor	M	Intermediate
10. Jason	M	Intermediate
11. Paris	M	Intermediate
12. Iphicles	M	Intermediate
13. Antigone	F	Intermediate
14. Laertes	M	Low-income
15. Theaetetus	M	Low-income
16. Hector	M	Low-income
17. Pericles	M	Low-income
18. Pylades	M	Low-income
19. Ismene	F	Low-income
20. Athena	F	Low-income

Table 6.1. Description of my Participants' Family Financial Situations

A similar story related to the lack of a personal space to study was reported by Ismene. She said it had been hard to study at home as her family was extended and there were always many people around. Ismene's father borrowed a motor home and installed it outside their house. Ismene used the motor home as her place to study before the nationwide exams. Moreover, all through her schooling childhood, she had to contribute to her family's income (*Ismene*, 176):

It had not only been the street market where we used to sell our stuff in the morning; it had also been the case of these street benches on the national road, where we usually sell stuff like watermelons. I have spent many summers sitting on these benches and selling stuff...

Another story highlighting some of my participants' poor living conditions was reported by Athena. Athena said that her mother used to beg from house to house or even read coffee cups in order to earn their living and be able to afford Athena's school expenses. Athena narrated a story illustrating her Roma family's financial situation and the accompanying feelings of inferiority they experienced because of their being poor Roma (*Athena*, 33):

I was at the last year of high school. One winter day, we were together with my classmates at the bus stop waiting to go home after school. My mum was on the same road ... she was wearing socks and slippers because she did not have any shoes to wear and she was begging ... I went towards her but she whispered 'Do not talk to me in order for them not to realise you are a Roma'. I turned to her, hugged her and introduced her to my classmates...

In cases of poorer participants, lack of money served as an additional difficulty; however, educational success was achieved by some despite significant financial difficulties. To sum up, money matters - to an extent - for many of my participants who experienced successful educational pathways. However, economic capital cannot be understood in isolation from the other forms of capital as they "together constitute advantage and disadvantage in society" (Reay,

2004a, p. 57). I now turn to the second major cluster of influences on educational success, family attitudes.

6.2.2. Influences of Familial Attitudes towards Education and Educational Success

According to Bourdieu (2006), an individual's habitus is primarily structured by early childhood experiences in the family (Bourdieu, 2006). My participants' narrations about their families offered me insights into how family dispositions and attitudes towards education might have influenced my participants' educational pathways and contributed to their success.

A key element in the educational success of most of my participants is the strong valuing of education by parents that informed their behaviours and practices in ways that facilitated their children's progression. This finding echoes other studies which indicate that family factors such as parental involvement (Byfield, 2008), the importance of education in the family (Byfield, 2008), practical help (e.g. with homework) (Rhamie, 2007) and expectations of success (Rhamie, 2007) are crucial in achieving educational success.

Before I detail the role my participants' familial attitudes and dispositions towards education played in their educational success, I present some information about my participants' families, for example their parents' education and occupation, family size, and siblings' education, in order to give a better overview of their family background (see also Appendix 14).

Hippocrates, Patroclus, Demosthenes, Theagenes, Ifigeneia, Alcmene, Electra and Miltiades (8/20 participants) come from relatively wealthy families. Except for Patroclus' parents who are not literate, all the other seven participants' parents are literate. These families generally have traditional occupations such as trading, but Patroclus' and Hippocrates' parents owned their own stores. In addition,

Alcmene's and Electra's father was a driver while their mother used to own a small convenience store. What can be observed is that these eight families did not have many children (three on average) – only Ifigeneia's family, who was very affluent, had five children. Moreover, all these eight participants' siblings had also progressed in terms of education; they had at least completed compulsory education while Ifigeneia's and Miltiades' siblings had all entered tertiary education.

The other twelve participants do not appear to be privileged in terms of access to economic capital. In eight cases (Nestor, Paris, Iphicles, Hector, Pericles, Pylades, Ismene, Athena), at least one of the two parents had been illiterate. Their parents had been traders. These participants did not have many siblings - up to three in most cases, except for Ismene who had six siblings. I refer to the number of siblings in this section, as evidence shows that children in smaller families perform better (Downey, 1995; Price, 2008).⁶⁴ In my participants' smaller families - apart from Paris, Athena and Pericles - most of my participants' siblings have progressed and completed non-compulsory education. My argument here is that, regardless of my participants' familial financial situation and their parental educational level, it seems that all these families encouraged their children's education. Indeed, almost all my participants (18/20) recognised the esteem in which education was held in their family. They noted that their progression was encouraged by parental and family expectations and positive dispositions towards education.

The maternal impact on children's educational progression is well reported in the literature (Vincent, 2012). In Bourdieu's theory, the mother is crucial in the way the family contributes to its children's capital, particularly in relation to the mother's time to transmit this

⁶⁴ Markou (2008) cites data regarding the number of children the Roma family has on average, according to which 64,4% of the Roma families have three to eight children while 27,1% have one to two children.

(Bourdieu, 2004). Some participants referred to their mother's interest in their educational progression. Miltiades talked of his mother's interest in her three sons' school progress and noted that, in contrast with the other Roma mothers in their local area, his mother maintained a close relationship with his school teachers. Similarly, Demosthenes' mother was interested in his school progress and encouraged him to study despite not being able to help him with his homework. Nestor's illiterate mother took care of his education from his early years and during his school years she hired a private tutor to help him; even in his first class, he had a teacher at home for Calligraphy. Nestor pointed out that having an educated person who helps students with their homework in their homes had been common practice for many non-Roma families in his area. Nestor was the only Roma in his area to have this support.

However, it was not only the maternal role that proved important for my participants' school success but also the impact their fathers had in this process. Recent studies show the positive relationship between father's involvement and children's development and outcomes (Lamb, 2004; Flouri, 2005; Pleck, 2007). Four of my participants highlighted the significant role their father had played in their educational lives. For instance, Ismene said that even when her aunts raised gendered issues in order to prevent her going away from home to attend university, her father was the one who supported her by saying (*Ismene*, 6): "Go, try, do, be active, study... I will stand by you...".

Pericles reported that his father had wanted to become a doctor. However, according to Pericles, his father had not been supported by his family and left school early. However, his father's dream was passed to Pericles who was encouraged by his father "to become a useful person in society" (*Pericles*, 7). Theagenes' father used to keep an eye on his performance. It had been mainly Theagenes' father who encouraged his school progression and offered him out-of-school support. Pylades' progression was also

facilitated by his father. When Pylades asked his father why he encouraged his education when all the other Roma around them did not, he received the following reply (*Pylades*, 87):

In order for you to have a different destiny than mine because I have spent my whole life on the roads ... and because I want to give you what my father did not give me in order for you to have a better future. Even if you do not study, your children will. When I die, I want to feel calm that you will have a better future.

In these cases, the father's role in educational progression was highlighted. This finding seems of importance especially when the patriarchal structure of Roma communities (Dragonas, 2012) is taken into consideration. That is to say that when the father's attitudes towards education are positive, then the Roma children's school progression may be better facilitated.

In some cases, as the narratives of Iphicles, Ismene, Pericles, Theagenes, Demosthenes and Pylades indicate, parents saw education as a way to ensure a better job/life for their children. In poorer families, education was seen in terms of its exchange value; in some wealthier families, education was seen as a means of upward social mobility. In particular, Theagenes said (*Theagenes*, 31):

My parents wanted something better for me. When I entered university, my dad had not told me 'Well done!'. He told me 'Your children should also achieve something better than what you did' ... He wanted me to make it, to achieve something better ... He wanted me to complete school, to enter university, to become educated, to become a good person ... Most Roma parents just care about how their children will bring money home and about them getting engaged and married.

This idea of achieving a better social position through education and also passing on this advanced position intergenerationally, even in the more prosperous families, was also reported by Ifigeneia. She stressed that education, and in particular progress in education, was the only option given to her by her family. Ifigeneia did not only talk of her parents' educational expectations but explained that these expectations derived from her grandfather's vision of educating his

grandchildren. Her grandfather was wealthy, had significant social and political connections and had struggled for Roma's rights.

Even in those cases where my participants' parents seem not to have held high aspirations for their children's education, such as in Hippocrates' and Electra's cases, they gave their sons and daughters the opportunity to choose their future. For instance, Electra said (*Electra*, 37):

My family stood by me ... They could see that I loved school, I loved to study ... I was a flag holder⁶⁵... and they let me do what I wanted...

Laertes and Theaetetus were the two of the twenty participants whose educational success had not been enhanced by their families. I refer to these two participants here in order to highlight that even these two participants emphasise the role of the family in educational success and also recognise that the lack of parental support had hindered their educational progression. They both became mature students after having dropped out from school during their teenage years. Theaetetus mentioned that his grandmother did not approve of her grandchildren attending school. Although he had access to educational resources such as books and newspapers bought by his father and although his parents were proud of his good school performance, he did not continue into high school. Theaetetus said that it would have been helpful for him if his parents had pushed him a bit more and encouraged him to study. Laertes noted that, even now that he is a lawyer, his father still does not value his educational progression if Laertes does not earn enough money. His father adheres to the traditional Roma values where success is related to high earnings and he cannot understand Laertes' need for self-improvement and love of education. Laertes also argued that the Greek state 'tolerates' Roma early dropout rates instead of punishing Roma parents who let their children leave school (*Laertes*, 542 - 544):

⁶⁵ During the school parade for the national Greek days (28th of October; 25th March), the student with the best performance of the last year of primary school, lower high school and high school holds the Greek flag.

It would have been good if someone (from the state services) had told my father ... 'What are you doing? Are you stopping your child's schooling? If you do so, you will lose the right to do this and that ...' I might sound too strict ... The advocate should say to the Roma parents 'As long as your child does not attend school, you will not have access to the benefits you take up to now'.

Another aspect which was evident in my interview data was the influence of siblings' support and success for some of my participants. Studies associate older and younger siblings' behaviours and characteristics (Brody, 2004) and illustrate the important role of the sibling relationship in cognitive development (Klein, Feldman & Zarur, 2002). Four of my twenty participants (Ifigeneia, Antigone, Electra and Theagenes) referred to the direct or even indirect impact their older siblings' education had on them. For Ifigeneia it was her older siblings who served as exemplars for her progression. Antigone recognised the important role her brother had in her progression. In particular, Antigone talked of her brother's continuous support towards her in every field. Theagenes argued that his older brother had not served as an example for his progression as his performance was not very good and he had not been studious. However, ever since their childhood, Theagenes, who is just one year younger than his brother, did his brother's homework with him and thus learnt how to read and write. Electra was inspired by her older sister (*Electra*, 39):

I do remember her (my sister) ... her books, her notes, her notebooks, her school bag, her pencil case, everything ... I remember her studying, staying awake all night (in order to study), getting stressed, going to the extra lessons ... I remember all these things ... I remember my parents, their getting worried about her (about her studying for so many hours) ... I remember the day she went to university for the first time and my feeling happy for that ... She was standing by me ... She used to provide advice on how to study, how to think, what I should do in my life ... to help me with specific school issues ... and with my behaviour ... It is a great privilege to have an older sibling who has already taken a step further...

Based on the above narratives, it seems that the family's impact on my participants' educational success had been important. In Bourdieusian terms, the family is the core site for habitus formation. It

is inside their family that most participants acquired – as individuals - positive dispositions towards education via the process of familial socialisation into their norms and values (Bourdieu, 2006) which supported educational success. However, although the familial influences on educational success are of great significance, there are other factors which also made a difference in my participants' pathways. The following section explores the influences of school factors on their educational success.

6.3. Influences of School on Educational Success

In this section, I discuss two core themes related to the school's impact on Roma's educational success: first, the contribution of teachers and school staff to my participants' progression and second, the influences of early success experiences (academic and non-academic experiences) on their later educational success.

6.3.1. Teachers and School Staff as Sponsors and Mentors of Roma Students

In the literature, it is reported that teachers play a key part in their students' academic achievement (Vandevoort et al, 2004). Similarly, in my study, most participants (17/20) spoke of the significant role that some of their teachers played in their progress. Table 6.2. provides an overview of the different ways in which my Roma participants received help from their teachers.

Participant	Ways in which teachers supported my participants
Hippocrates (M)	Teachers might have shown extra liking because of his Roma origin (<i>Hippocrates</i> , 23)
Patroclus (M)	Two teachers at the Roma primary school supported him a lot and encouraged him to attend the all-day

	<p>school (<i>Patroclus</i>, 57).</p> <p>Teacher at technical high school advised him to study Finance (<i>Patroclus</i>, 142).</p>
Theagenes (M)	<p>Teachers offered emotional support because of his Roma origin (<i>Theagenes</i>, 252).</p> <p>Teachers helped him especially during events where Theagenes had experienced discrimination (<i>Theagenes</i>, 41, 42).</p>
Alcmene (F)	<p>Teacher at lower high school advised her parents to choose general high school (<i>Alcmene</i>, 44).</p> <p>Teacher at high school encouraged her before the nationwide exams (<i>Alcmene</i>, 444-449).</p>
Electra (F)	<p>Teachers served as sources of cultural and social capital (<i>Electra</i>, 14).</p> <p>Two female high school teachers supported her a lot; she felt that they wanted to give her an extra push because she was a Roma (<i>Electra</i>, 122-124).</p> <p>High school teacher who found out that local newspapers had presented Electra as an exemplar was happy and thought that there should be attempts to present cases of Roma students who progress against the odds (<i>Electra</i>, 127).</p>
Jason (M)	<p>He had been inspired by teachers – his Roma origin was not known.</p> <p>His teacher at the 5th grade of primary school was from Istanbul herself. She visited Jason's carpet shop, met his parents and Jason started to socialise with her children (<i>Jason</i>, 120).</p> <p>Jason talked of a philologist with whom he had a very good relationship (<i>Jason</i>, 120).</p> <p>Jason referred to his physics professor at high school. Jason took part in this professor's environmental school group and also helped his professor with taking photos (<i>Jason</i>, 131). (Later on, this professor used to make extra money through video-recording weddings etc. and used to take Jason with him and give him a tip).</p> <p>Finally, Jason referred to a male philologist at high school who was a highly educated person and inspired Jason to learn more about the Greek language (<i>Jason</i>, 141). All the students used to call this teacher 'The Teacher' (<i>Jason</i>, 143).</p>

Paris (M)	<p>Teachers recognised him as clever</p> <p>Teacher at primary school pushed his father to send him to lower high school (<i>Paris</i>, 117-119)</p> <p>Paris distinguished a female Finance teacher as a key teacher in his pathway. She had encouraged him a lot, she had advised him to choose the Finance courses and she had high aspirations for him: she still keeps in touch with him to ask him about his studies (<i>Paris</i>, 174).</p>
Antigone (F)	<p>Antigone talked of her teacher (language teacher/philologist) at lower high school who inspired her and served as an example for her (<i>Antigone</i>, 106).</p> <p>Her primary school teachers were kind people, motivated her and helped her.</p>
Laertes (M)	<p>Laertes was recognised as an intelligent child by his teachers (<i>Laertes</i>, 313).</p> <p>Head teacher at primary school congratulated his parents for their children's school attendance (<i>Laertes</i>, 290)</p>
Theaetetus (M)	<p>Theaetetus said that some teachers' behaviour helped him to raise his goals and be self-confident (<i>Theaetetus</i>, 102, 103). 4 teachers had played a key role in his progression (the head teacher at his primary school and a maths teacher, a philologist and a theologian at lower high school); these teachers had been more encouraging towards him compared to other good students because they wanted to give him an extra push as he was a Roma (<i>Theaetetus</i>, 110).</p> <p>Positive experiences at the religious high school he attended as an adult</p>
Hector (M)	<p>Hector said his primary teachers were taking care of their students like they were their parents. Teachers could see some students' 'deficits' and were trying to help them (<i>Hector</i>, 47). Hector used to participate in extra tutorial classes at school where he received help for his homework (<i>Hector</i>, 48).</p>
Pericles (M)	<p>Teachers at Roma school put him in a class with the most able students</p> <p>Teachers at high school had given him higher grades in order to encourage him because of his Roma origin</p> <p>Teacher at lower high school advised him to choose general high school</p>
Pylades (M)	<p>Pylades referred to one of his encouraging primary teachers who called him to congratulate him when he</p>

	<p>entered University (<i>Pylades</i>, 132).</p> <p>Pylades recognised that many teachers supported him a lot (<i>Pylades</i>, 134).</p> <p>The head of high school supported him in many ways (advice to enter university through a special category of candidates addressing students with special needs, money as a gift for Pylades' entrance at university).</p>
Ismene (F)	<p>The school librarian encouraged her to take part in a literature competition where she won the 1st prize.</p> <p>Teachers helped her (she says they did not give her an extra push) BUT they accepted her and encouraged her and they let her attend the last year of high school although this had not been 'legal' (<i>Ismene</i>, 145).</p> <p>Ismene was inspired to study Finance by her Finance teacher at the last year of high school (<i>Ismene</i>, 37).</p>
Athena (F)	<p>The head teacher of primary school encouraged her a lot (<i>Athena</i>, 100).</p> <p>High school: all the teachers supported her and expelled her classmate who insulted her because of her Roma origin (<i>Athena</i>, 123).</p>
Miltiades (M)	<p>Teachers inspired him, e.g. the chemistry teacher (<i>Miltiades</i>, 88, 89)</p>
Nestor (M)	<p>Roma origin not known at school – no special references to teachers</p> <p>Nestor received support from a private English teacher who taught him English for free (evening school, Nestor's neighbour found this evening English courses) (<i>Nestor</i>, 31).</p> <p>A teacher (taught religion) at high school kept an eye on Nestor as she was a friend of his neighbour (<i>Nestor</i>, 63).</p>

Table 6.2. Ways in which Teachers Supported my Participants

As shown in Table 6.2., teachers' support for my Roma participants is not only seen in the form of their academic progress; my participants also reported the emotional support and the advice offered by these teachers. In what follows, I highlight some events my

participants narrated that illustrate the school staff's contribution to their educational pathways.

Alcmene noted the contribution of two supportive teachers who believed in her. She recognised her teachers' encouragement and highlighted an event/critical moment where the role of her teachers in her progression proved decisive. When she completed lower high school, her mother did not know if Alcmene should attend the technical high school or the mainstream general high school. It was her teachers who told her parents that Alcmene was academically able. Alcmene's philologist advised her mother to send her to the general high school. A similar event was reported by Pericles. A teacher at his lower high school advised him to choose the general and not the technical high school if he wanted to enter university and study at a higher level as attendance at general high school leads to direct entrance at university more easily.

Paris had received support from his teachers who explicitly recognised him as a clever boy who should try more. In the end of primary school, a teacher had advised Paris' father to send him to high school and said that Paris was academically able. Laertes reported that the head of his primary school had complimented his parents on sending their children to school and upturning the stereotypes of the irregular school attendance of Roma children.

Patroclus referred to his Finance teacher at the technical high school who made the difference in his pathway. Patroclus said that he loved to spend time with him because he was a good person who offered him useful advice. In particular, this teacher suggested that Patroclus should study Finance and open an office in the Roma camp taking into account that Patroclus would be able to access 3,000-3,500 Roma (clients) in their area. Patroclus had found it a good idea and thought that in this way he would have a job and also help his community which is often 'exploited' by non-Roma accountants.

Alcmene recalled another event where a teacher at the end of high school encouraged her to enter university. Before the national exams, she gave Alcmene a gift and wished her good luck. This teacher was invited by Alcmene to her graduation ceremony and was there to congratulate her old student (*Alcmene*, 444-449):

I was at the 3rd year of high school and she talked to me in a very special way ... She gave me a present and told me 'Go on!'... This had happened before the nationwide exams... (It reinforced my attempt) ... I remember that I used to recall this event while studying for the exams ... and even the memory of the event used to buck me up ... And this teacher also came to my graduation ceremony...

Theagenes argued that the teacher's role in supporting excluded students is critical. He said (*Theagenes*, 188, 189):

The teachers' behaviour is important ... They have to support the children ... Because the children who are discriminated against (cannot handle this situation) and they get worried ... And the teachers have to help these children go on...

Theagenes noted that sometimes at school he had felt that teachers had given him some extra support because of his Roma origin - in terms of emotional support. He considers this type of behaviour in a very positive way. He added (*Theagenes*, 253):

When you are at a very young age, somebody needs to be there to help. The parents are not there to offer their help ... If the teacher does not help, then who will?

Miltiades, who had also been inspired by some of his teachers, regarded the teacher's role as crucial for a student's successful pathway and argued that the teacher's role should not just be limited to the school walls and the school timetable. An indicative example where this had been realised relates to Pylades who referred to the head of his high school in a touching way. This is a part of what Pylades said about him (*Pylades*, 191):

This man has an indelible place in my mind and my heart ... He motivated me and supported me to reach this current point ... I just had in mind to complete high school ... One day, he

took me to his office and told me 'You should go on ... You will become the mediator (between the Roma and the non-Roma) ... If you want to achieve this, you will ... and I am here for you'.

Pylades said that this teacher passed away recently. When Pylades met his teacher's wife to express his condolences for his death, she gave him a present that he had left for Pylades: it was 500 euros; this had been his teacher's bequest for Pylades in order to cover his first expenses for his university studies. Pylades believes that this teacher's help had been priceless and therefore he did not want to accept the money because it was as if he undervalued all the other non-material things his teacher had given to him.

Even in cases, where school conditions and the circumstances had not been advantageous, as in the Roma school Pericles attended, his teachers supported him (*Pericles*, 139, 142):

These teachers have done everything for me ... They opened my eyes ... Imagine a blind person who sees after an operation ... Won't they remember the doctor and feel grateful? ... They taught me things ... One other teacher wanted to put me at the first class when I entered primary school but these teachers had put me at the 'advanced' class⁶⁶ ... We were 12 (Roma) students at this class and I was the 12th; the other 11 had been better than me ... If they had continued, they would have become scientists ... They finally got married ... I went on.

In Ismene's case, it had been the school librarian who made a difference in her educational pathway. Ismene talked of the school librarian as a significant other in her pathway. She had seen Ismene coming frequently to the library and reading many books (Greek literature). The librarian knew about Ismene's Roma origin and Ismene thinks that this had affected the librarian's behaviour when she informed her about the literature competition where Ismene submitted a poem and won the first prize.

⁶⁶ It seems that, in the Roma school that Pericles attended, the teachers grouped the Roma students based on their performance.

To sum up, most of my participants talked of inspiring teachers who offered them advice to continue their schooling, choose the appropriate type of school or field of studies and offered support when events of discrimination against them took place. Alcmene called her teachers her “second family” (*Alcmene*, 301). In these stories, these teachers offered guidance, advice and counsel to their students in a way which helped these students ‘play the game’ and enhanced these students’ agency towards educational success. Evidence suggests the important role of mentoring in pupils’ educational success (Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Hoskins, 2012). What makes the teacher’s role even more crucial for the progression of Roma students is that in many cases, teachers are the only educated people with whom the Roma students come into contact. Apart from the crucial role of mentoring and sponsorship attributed to the teachers, the following extracts illustrate how teachers can serve as sources of cultural and social capital for their Roma students contributing to the transformation of their habitus through schooling (Bourdieu, 2006). Electra commented (*Electra*, 14):

We live in an area ... where the educational level of the people is very low... I did not have any opportunities to contact educated people. The only (educated) people I have contacted were my teachers who - ever since my primary years - had implanted (valuable) things in me ... I believe that teachers are the only people who can help students from disadvantaged groups...

Alcmene noted (*Alcmene*, 291, 294, 295):

Isn’t the teacher the basic axis of education? ... The teacher is the one who will give you the zest and the ‘equipment’ to go on and will indicate the options you have in front of you and the alternatives ... In the case of Roma children, where the Roma family might not be so supportive, the teacher’s role becomes much more important...

In this section, I have highlighted the importance of my participants’ stories involving school staff – mainly teachers. These stories do not reflect the lack of enthusiasm towards Roma students from those working in the Greek school system that is often reported (e.g. Nikolaou, 2009). However, in a few cases, some participants did

refer to negative experiences where teachers did not respect and address the culture and living conditions of Roma. Before I turn to the next section, I consider some of the negative experiences some participants reported.

Ismene noted that she changed the primary school she attended at the beginning of her school years because the teacher there had been stricter with his Roma students. Later on, Ismene had been punished for not wearing sports clothes at the physical education course at school, although her family could not afford them. Athena referred to her music teacher who used to laugh at her because of her Roma origin. One day, she insulted her in the classroom by saying that the only thing Athena needed was a tambourine in order to dance the Gypsy way (*tsifteteli*). Pericles referred to his Ancient Greek teacher at high school who gave him lower grades than he deserved on the basis of his performance at this course because his Greek was not fluent. In social justice terms, these accounts capture the injustices of recognition that some low-income Roma participants had experienced at school when certain teachers shamed them for not being able to afford the right kind of clothing (in the case of Ismene), for belonging to a community whose members often play/listen to a specific type of music that the music teacher undervalued (in the case of Athena) and for not having Greek as the first language (in the case of Pericles).

I highlight these negative events involving teachers as they add to the argument I want to make here: although in most cases, the teachers' role was reported as a key factor in Roma's success, these caring, kind, encouraging teachers acted as individuals, indicating the absence of systematic interventions and policies which could promote the educational success of Roma students. Moreover, the negative events described above also illustrate some shortcomings in teachers' professional commitments towards their Roma students reflecting arguments made by Chatzisavvidis (2007) and Mavrommatis (2008) about the absence of any training provided for teachers who teach

Roma students in Greece (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.). In some cases, some participants did not know how to make the best choices for their educational trajectories. For instance, Demosthenes made mistakes when he submitted his list with the university departments he wished to enter; Paris and Pericles had not been aware of the differences between the technical and general high school (including the crucial fact that entrance to university was easier through the latter); Ismene retook the nationwide exams in order to enter the Finance department near her city although she had the right to transfer because she belongs to a family with many children and two of them are disabled.⁶⁷ These examples underline the need for educationalists to make a difference through enhancing the professional and continuing education of teachers and the commitment of the school staff involved (e.g. those teaching professional orientation classes), so that they are better informed and better able to support their Roma students. The need for teacher training with intercultural dimensions is emphasised in the Greek context (Paleologou, 2004) but also at an international level (Lander, 2014). In the next section, I present the role of early success experiences as important in my participants' educational pathways.

6.3.2. Influences of Early Success Experiences

Most of my participants (18/20) reported early academic success as having influenced their later educational achievements.

⁶⁷ Students who enter Greek higher education are eligible to transfer their place from the department they entered to an equivalent department in another city on the basis of socio-economic criteria, such as family income, family size (number of children) and health issues. In most cases, these students' results at the National (Panhellenic) Exams have not allowed their entrance to the department they preferred - frequently in the capital or in big Greek cities. According to the current law 4274/2014 (article 47), during the academic year 2014-2015, family income was the key criterion for transfers (upper limit of 9,000 euros per family member). When two students have the same family income, then the student who had performed higher was prioritised. The number of students who transfer to a department cannot exceed 10% of the number of the students who entered this specific department.

For instance, Ismene won a prize in a school literature competition for a poem she had written; Antigone, Hector, Electra and Alcmene had held the Greek flag during the school parade (the flag is held by the best student); Theaetetus was praised for a piece of writing he had submitted to a school competition; Hippocrates' performance had been excellent - he had successfully passed the "selective" exams to enter lower high school (after primary school) and then high school (after lower high school); Jason had experienced success at school for his high performance, especially through gaining excellence awards ("aristeia").

A special success story was reported by Laertes who took part in The Parliament of the Adolescents.⁶⁸ Laertes submitted a piece of writing entitled "The heroes of the Evening High School". He had analysed the meaning of the term "hero" and then turned to the students of the evening high school and explained why they are heroes (their experiences, their being tired etc.). Laertes recalls his parliament experience in a very positive way. In the Parliament, Laertes' speech was about the lives of Roma in Greece.

Having experienced academic success at an early age seems to have contributed to my participants' further educational progression as early success experiences seem to have boosted their self-confidence. Early academic school success can result in higher levels of academic confidence and motivation (Zigler et al., 1982, cited in Campbell & Ramey, 1995), which might "prevent school dropout, leading to better vocational preparation, subsequent higher rates of employment, and ultimately greater economic power and social contribution" (Campbell & Ramey, 1995, p. 744). Moreover, early success of a non-academic nature also seems to have played a role in my participants' educational success. At this point, I should recognise a risk related to students coming from so-called underachieving

⁶⁸ Every year, high school students write an assignment (they choose the topic) and submit it in order to take part in the Parliament of the Adolescents (3-4 days event where they go to the parliament and behave as if they are elected members of parliament and express their problems).

groups: they are frequently encouraged to get involved in non-academic activities instead of academic ones (Byfield, 2008). Patroclus, Ifigeneia and Iphicles referred to their involvement in school music activities. Furthermore, Ifigeneia, Electra, Paris, Pericles and Pylades achieved distinction at sports competitions. In my study, some participants related their non-academic success experiences to their educational success. In particular, in the case of music and sports activities, my participants' involvement seems to have facilitated their social connections with non-Roma peers and school inclusion as it contributed to these participants' accumulation of useful cultural and social capital. For example, Iphicles commented (*Iphicles*, 137):

My participation in the school music group had, to an extent, helped my educational progression as my involvement improved my character and increased my disposition to work hard and cultivate team spirit...

Pericles associated his involvement in the local football team with his 'smooth' transition to the local high school and his school performance. He said (*Pericles*, 297, 298, 303, 306):

I knew many non-Roma peers through the football team with whom we used to play together, travel and stay together – during the football trips ... and thus, this facilitated my school inclusion when I entered the mainstream lower high school ... My involvement in the football team helped my school progression because I used to follow a disciplined lifestyle ... Moreover, I used to get excellent grades at the Physical Education course.

6.4. Influences of Community

The importance of community influence is recognised as an element contributing to educational success (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002). In my research, all my participants referred to community aspects which influenced their educational pathways. In most cases, it had been key persons in the local community who made a significant contribution to my participants' educational pathways. I have already detailed the impact of some of these such as the teachers and family

members. In this section, I highlight the important role other key people or even organised groups and institutions – such as the church, religious groups and volunteer organisations - had on my participants' successful pathways.

6.4.1. Influences of Roma Role Models

I start by focusing on how positive exemplars of other successful Roma boosted some of my participants' progression. The influence of role models is often identified as a factor in educational success (Rhamie & Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008). In my study, I deploy the term role model to convey the positive influence that Roma examples of success had on my participants.

Twelve participants referred to the influence of Roma role models on their educational progression. Antigone and Jason were inspired by their relatives. Pericles' and Patroclus' school attendance was boosted by older Roma students who were continuing into high school. Alcmene was also seeing older Roma in her area getting registered at the technical high school. For Theaetetus, two other educated Roma had served as positive examples. Laertes was influenced to continue into higher education by some high-profile educated Roma he met at seminars for Roma adults; these people had not only inspired him but offered him encouragement, help and support to an extent that Laertes regarded them as his mentors. Iphicles was encouraged to continue into higher education by his cousins who are engineers. Thus, Iphicles decided to follow this occupation and thinks that his degree will better equip him to fulfill his ambitions.

However, Ifigeneia and Theaetetus doubted whether older successful Roma have a strong positive impact on younger Roma. Ifigeneia talked of some Roma who get involved in Roma's educational programmes just in order to earn money. Thus, these

successful Roma cannot serve as positive role models as Roma families disapprove of their intentions. Theaetetus also argued that educated Roma can have a limited impact on the progression of Roma because, based on his experiences, he sees that Roma do not care so much about education (*Theaetetus*, 199, 200):

Even in my case, when I say that I am a Roma priest, Roma children are not interested in my educational pathway ... They just keep in mind that I might be able to offer them material things ... And this is how it works for them ... They grow up finding out that the others (can) provide materials ... They do not seek intellectual goods...

To sum up, educationally successful Roma can serve as positive examples for younger Roma, to some extent. Indeed, some participants, such as Theagenes, Miltiades, Paris and Jason, suggested that the participation of educated Roma in educational interventions addressing Roma students could encourage their progression. However, other participants doubted the effectiveness of the role models in the educational progression of Roma students.

6.4.2. Peers' Influence on the Educational Success of Roma

Ten participants talked of the influence that peers can have on educational success. According to many participants' accounts, education tends not to be prioritised in the Roma community; thus Roma friends can have an 'anti-school' impact on other Roma resulting in their leaving school. Alcmene noted (*Alcmene*, 283 - 286):

There are cases where the families want to send their children to school ... I know mothers who try hard for that, but their children play truant from lower high school ... And then what can the Roma parents do? ... It is also the mentality in the area around ... especially when a teenager goes out with friends ... there are these ideas prevailing that 'it is now your time to dress up and go out ... find a boyfriend/girlfriend' ... Education is not a significant topic in Roma teenagers' discussions...

In Laertes' pathway, this 'anti-school' peer influence had been evident. When he dropped out from lower high school, his Roma peers

had already left school and they started to all go out together. Laertes described this period of his life as a very pleasant one where his friends and himself had no schedule, used to earn money through itinerant trade and had lots of time and money to travel around Greece and have fun. Iphicles had also recognised the impact of peers on his progression as he compared the situation he experienced in Cyprus and in a Roma area in Greece (*Iphicles*, 59, 61):

In Cyprus, my friends were competitive in terms of tests, essays, performance... In contrast, in Greece, my friends (Roma and non-Roma) were not interested in school ... Thus, anybody would be influenced by them by becoming indifferent...

Electra and Alcmene referred to how they avoided this 'dark side of social capital' (Field, 2003) by not socialising with their Roma friends who had dropped out. They both experienced this loss of friends as the cost they paid for continuing their education. Alcmene said (*Alcmene*, 490):

I was sad because I stopped seeing some Roma female friends with whom I grew up ... I did not have any friends ... My classmates became my friends.

Electra said (*Electra*, 105):

This last year, I used to socialise only with girls from my school because I could not devote time for my friends from my neighbourhood; they were not at school and could not understand the pressure I was experiencing. Because of the fact that I could not go out with them or welcome them home, they 'left' me and I just had my classmates; my classmates knew what I was going through; they were experiencing the same.

Paris, Theagenes, Hippocrates and Miltiades explicitly highlighted the beneficial role their contacts with non-Roma peers had on their progression. Hippocrates said that his contacts with his non-Roma friends had influenced his progression as through them he gained 'a different way of thinking, different mentality and aims' (*Hippocrates*, 38). As discussed earlier (see Section 6.3.2.), some participants identified their non-Roma peers' impact on their educational pathways emphasising extra-curricular or out-of-school

activities - such as music groups for Iphicles and sports groups in the cases of Pericles and Miltiades - through which they had become more accepted in non-Roma groups.

The non-Roma peer networks of my participants have been, in the main, considered significant for their educational success. In Bourdieusian terms, social capital explains some of my participants' progression - a finding echoing Halpern's (2005) argument about the impact of social capital on educational outcomes. In some cases, participants, like Alcmene and Electra, avoided their Roma peers in order to 'protect' themselves from the community's pattern of early dropouts. Thus, this 'dark side of social capital' (Field, 2003) had been displaced. Lauglo's (2000) claim that accessing certain forms of social capital can 'trump' the disadvantages of social class seems to be confirmed in cases such as Pericles'; Pericles joined non-Roma sports groups and this contributed to the social connections he created with non-Roma peers. Thus, Pericles' school inclusion was facilitated despite his coming from a Roma school and living under poor conditions inside the local Roma camp.

6.4.3. Influences of Religion

Most Roma in Greece are members of the Greek Orthodox Church (Chatzissavidis, 2007) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). Support from some religious groups and other religious sources were identified as factors that helped six of my participants' progression.

Ismene highlighted the internal strength she gained through her religious feelings which helped her overcome the problems she confronted in life. In addition, she said religion gave her guidance and ethical principles. Pylades talked of the help he received from God in his pathway. Pylades said that God, first, brought him to life; second, gave him his amazing family and his supportive father; third, helped him enter university. Laertes explained that religion helped him to set long-term goals (*Laertes*, 109):

I do think that these religious things had affected my pathway, mostly in terms of planning my life after fifteen years and not considering short-term aims. For example, when I had the goal as a child (to study Law) I was influenced by many Saint's lives that I have read which were informed by the rationale ... to improve my life ... Reading religious books even helped my dealing with journalism ... It was helpful during my mediating role although I just had the primary school's certificate.

Religion equipped Laertes with additional cultural capital because he started to read religious books and cultivate his linguistic skills as he needed to understand the monk's words, the religious readings and prayers.⁶⁹

Nestor was influenced to enter university by an inspiring theologian of the religious group he joined. In Nestor's case, this religious group served as an additional source of social capital. Many years ago, on St John's day, there was a lecture about St John. Nestor attended the lecture by chance and was inspired by the passionate theologian who was delivering the talk. This theologian became a 'significant other' in Nestor's progression (*Nestor*, 37):

I went to this speech with this invitation which was about St John... I saw this man, who was blind, talking with passion about the Saint, and after that, I found out who he was ... I was really fascinated. I started to attend meetings with the guys, I made new contacts, I was socialising more. I mean that, as we understand, there were some personal 'teachers' in my life and then some institutions, such as the 'Epalxeis' (Battlements), a religious group where this man ... had a really important role. I was going there every Saturday. There were many young people there and this was a place which had responded to my searching.

In Theaetetus' educational trajectory, religion is of paramount importance. Theaetetus had decided to become a monk during his teenage years. His active involvement in the Christian Orthodox religion led him to study Theology. In his case, higher studies and priesthood had been suggested by his Superior Father as a chance for emotional investment and social cultivation outside the monastery. At Mount Athos, Theaetetus lived as a monk. Theaetetus' Superior

⁶⁹ In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the prayers are written in a (more advanced and complex) type of Greek language closer to Ancient Greek.

Father identified his psychological need to study in order to be more effective later on to dedicate himself to his intellectual duties. Thus, Theaetetus left the monastery and studied. According to Theaetetus' account, his monastic life equipped him with the power he needed in order to realise some personal dreams. Theaetetus thinks that his Superior Father understood that he needed to cultivate some aspects of himself and wanted him to live in the real world in order to understand people and avoid an impediment that, in his opinion, monks in monasteries usually face: they pray alone and can be very strict with people and intolerant of people's mistakes because they have not cultivated themselves in terms of developing a compassionate and community-oriented outlook. Theaetetus emphasised the idea that religion can equip Roma people with the vision to achieve a goal (*Theaetetus*, 130):

Religion can contribute to Roma's 'cultivation' ... In particular, through the religious sources and texts the Roma can gain visions and learn to offer without expecting to get something back ... The Gypsy heart can potentially offer ... but this part of the Roma's personality stays inactive ... In general, the person who does not offer and does not take part in a community through a creative way stays incomplete...

Theaetetus explained that caring priests frequently try to help Roma people and their education in their parish. However, sometimes these attempts do not follow specific pedagogical principles. He gave the example of a non-Roma priest who helped the Roma children in his ministry (in an area in Athens). However, Theaetetus was opposed to this priest's approach as in the Sunday school he forbade the Roma children to speak Romani; Theaetetus found this practice (not speaking Romani) assimilating as it seemed to him that the Roma only get accepted after 'renouncing' their language. Theaetetus' argument seems consistent with linguistic approaches which support the use of the students' mother tongue in the educational process as discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.2.).

Iphicles highlighted the emotional sponsorship he received from the priest in his local area. The priest of Dendropotamos is very active and helps the Roma in many ways. He also established 'The lighthouse of the world' where volunteers take care of children - mainly Roma children (who are abandoned, whose parents are in prison etc.). Iphicles said that this priest had helped him a lot emotionally to continue his higher studies. Electra participated as a volunteer in some English courses organised by this priest where she offered help to young Roma students.

These examples suggest that support coming from some religious groups and other religious sources was an important factor in the success of some of my participants. This finding echoes that of other studies, such as Byfield's (2008), where the role that religion had played in black boys' progression was emphasised. Byfield (2008), following a Bourdieusian approach, coined the term 'Divine capital' to describe the spiritual connection her participants had with God. According to Byfield (2008), the possession of Divine capital enhanced both the social and cultural capital of black students; a similar finding emerged in relation to some of my participants, as described above.

6.4.4. Influences of Volunteers and Organisations

Now, I turn to volunteers and organisations as a factor in my participants' success. This factor was only reported by two participants but I include it here because I am interested in producing a comprehensive mapping of the full range of factors that influenced my participants' success and for one participant in particular, the role of volunteer organisations emerged as a key variable. The role of volunteer organisations could also potentially be an important aspect when considering the elements of future interventions.

Alcmene referred to an NGO's impact on the educational progression of Roma. She had already been a university student when she got involved in *Oikokoinwnia*. She recalled the help and support

offered by members of this non-governmental organisation to Roma females in her area.

Hector attributed a great part of his educational progression to the volunteer organisation *Dromoi Zois* (Paths of Life). He highlighted the support offered to him by this organisation and emphasised the importance of this organisations' role in the educational progression of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Hector remembers the day when he met the couple who established the organisation: he was playing in the road with his peers who already knew them; the other children were happy when they saw them and ran towards them. At that time, the organisation was searching for a stable place to establish their centre. Hector took part in the extra lessons (for homework) offered at the centre. In addition, he participated in activities such as theatre and music. According to Hector, it had been very beneficial that the centre had not served merely as a 'supplementary school' (where homework gets done and academic help is offered); out of school activities had also been offered through which children were able to engage in creative activities.

Nowadays, Hector helps the organisation as a volunteer. Sometimes, he helps students with their homework but he mostly gets involved when they have theatrical performances where he plays music (he plays the guitar and the oud) and also participates as an actor. Hector's close relationship with this organisation was revealed through his following words (*Hector*, 59):

Now, I do not see it as a centre ... I feel it is my place and I should help there because now it is more difficult as they have many more children, more volunteers and they need higher levels of organisation and participation.

It seems that this organisation's contribution to Hector's educational success was of paramount importance. This centre served as a source of cultural and social capital which facilitated Hector's educational pathway.

6.4.5. Influences of ‘Significant Others’

In this last section on community influences, I refer to cases of neighbours or adults from my participants’ areas who supported them. Antigone talked of a wealthy couple (neighbours) who paid for her books and her extra private lessons. Her male neighbour recently passed away and this event made Antigone reflect on how important it is to have people to find something in you and invest in your progression. Antigone calls these two people ‘uncle and aunt’ and they have a special place in her heart. Patroclus referred to two non-Roma persons he met at the local gym – a doctor and an accountant - as significant others. These two men used to discuss many things with him and had advised him to enter higher education.

Nestor detailed his neighbour’s contribution to his educational trajectory. She had supported him during his school years by accessing extra free lessons for him to help him with his homework and by having always ‘been there’ for him to provide advice. The significance of her support also became obvious ‘through her absence’. Nestor recalled that after his failure in the nationwide exams, he could not receive any advice on what to do next because his reliable neighbour had passed away. Athena referred to a private English teacher in her local area; Athena was registered with her evening school in order to learn English. After some months, her father visited Athena’s English teacher in order to withdraw her from the class as he could not afford the fees; however, this lady did not let Athena leave her class. Athena continued to attend the English courses for free for many years until she got her English diploma.

Thus, in many cases, ‘significant others’ became my participants’ sponsors and mentors by offering them opportunities for their educational progression and by giving them guidance, advice and counsel. The impact that sponsorship and mentoring has had on the educational progression of people coming from non-privileged groups has been reported in other studies such as Rhamie’s and Hallam’s (2002), Byfield’s (2008) and Hoskins’ (2012) studies.

As illustrated in this section, community aspects, such as Roma role models, peers, religious sources and groups, volunteers and helpful adults, have been identified as having contributed to my participants' educational success. My participants benefited mostly through the mentoring offered by key people (Tenenbaum et al., 2001) and by having enhanced their cultural and social capital in a way which was supportive in the field of formal education.

6.5. Influences of Locality

For Bourdieu (2004), the density and durability of ties are vital. It makes sense to expect that it is harder for Roma people who travel for trading reasons to create and preserve durable networks. According to Israel, Beaulieu and Hartless (2011), the stability of living in a locality for a long period without the interruption of a physical move to another school or community helps children do better in school.

None of my participants' families were travelling on a regular basis; they were all settled in specific areas. Half of my participants (10/20) were raised in Roma areas,⁷⁰ six participants were raised in non-Roma areas and four participants have mixed experiences (Ifigeneia lived in non-Roma areas and abroad; Iphicles lived in Roma areas, non-Roma areas and abroad; Jason and Antigone were raised in non-Roma areas and spent some of their childhood in Romania). All my participants were raised in urban areas, a fact which may have eased their educational progression as, according to Mylonas (2006), living in geographically privileged Greek areas (such as urban areas) facilitates access to a better education. Table 6.3. presents some information about my participants' locales.

⁷⁰ In this thesis, when I refer to Roma areas, I include areas such as Roma camps where only Roma people live and also areas where many Roma are settled even when non-Roma people also live in the same area.

Participant⁷¹	Urban or Rural areas	Roma or Non-Roma areas	Comments
Hippocrates (M) (W)	Urban	Roma area	
Patroclus (M) (W)	Urban	Roma area	
Alcmene (F) (W)	Urban	Roma area	
Electra (F) (W)	Urban	Roma area	
Laertes (M) (L)	Urban	Roma area	
Theaetetus (M) (L)	Urban	Roma area	
Pericles (M) (L)	Urban	Roma area	
Pylades (M) (L)	Urban	Roma area	
Ismene (F) (L)	Urban	Roma area	
Miltiades (M) (I/W)	Urban	Roma area	He studied and lives abroad
Nestor (M) (I)	Urban	Non-Roma area	
Paris (M) (I)	Urban	Non-Roma area	
Athena (F) (L)	Urban	Non-Roma area	
Demosthenes (M) (W)	Urban	Non-Roma area	
Theagenes (M) (W)	Urban	Non-Roma area	
Hector (M) (L)	Urban	Non-Roma area	

⁷¹ I use M for Male, F for Female; W for Wealthy, I for Intermediate and L for Low-Income to describe my participants.

Jason (M) (I)	Urban	Non-Roma area	& abroad (Romania)
Iphicles (M) (I)	Urban	Non-Roma area, Roma area	& abroad (Cyprus)
Antigone (F) (I)	Urban	Non-Roma area	& abroad (Romania)
Ifigeneia (F) (W)	Urban	Non-Roma area	& abroad (UK)

Table 6.3. Information about Participants' Locales

Some of my participants who had not lived in Roma areas talked of the benefits of their experiences of living away from Roma communities. Nestor emphasised the importance of space in his educational progression (*Nestor*, 84):

The space is crucial as well. Maybe, the fact, let's start from the space. The fact that I was not in Agia Varvara (Roma area). During that period, Agia Varvara was full of life and despite the fact that there was a kind of (upward) social mobility for the Gypsies in Agia Varvara concerning their having a house, there was not a similar social mobility concerning educational goods. So, when someone, a young man – we do not talk about women - was starting to enter university or entered university, the reality was so hard in order to get married, to do things ... that he was losing his way. So, in terms of geography, the fact that I was not in Agia Varvara, I was in another region where I had different incentives ... I had different reactions - nothing is accidental - from different people. Despite my having been weak in education, I managed to follow a route.

Theagenes identified the fact that he lived in a non-Roma area in combination with the fact that he had non-Roma contacts/friends as influential in his progression. Paris argued that living in areas with non-Roma Greeks also enabled his educational success as this provided access to different forms of capital, experiences and role models.

However, ten of my participants were brought up in Roma areas. In Alcmena's and Electra's local area, a Roma Female Association is active in fighting for Roma children's education. Positive attitudes towards education and some small-scale educational interventions in this area promoted an 'ethos' which facilitated their educational progression.

Hippocrates explained the impact of space and place on his progression; he comes from an advantaged Roma area in Athens where Roma people are settled and many are wealthy. He reported that in his area, the relationships between Roma and non-Roma are very good. Laertes and Theaetetus also come from this area. Laertes had been helped to continue his education by some training opportunities offered to Roma people in his local area - interventions had targeted the Roma in this area (e.g. seminars about journalism and mediating). The tolerant environment of this area became evident to Theaetetus, when during his childhood, he and his family experienced overt discrimination for the first time because of their Roma origin while being on a Greek island (*Theaetetus*, 95):

We were in Crete ... We were queuing with my siblings and my parents in order to attend a concert ... A person shouted that he lost his wallet and suddenly, he turned to us and said 'It is them (who got it)' ... The police came and we went to the police station. In the police station, this man realised that he had put his wallet in his other pocket ... Just the idea that we (the Roma) were next to him made him feel so afraid ... This event had bothered me ... It bothered me that the prejudice that 'the Roma are thieves' resulted in this event ... And I do remember that I was also disappointed by the policemen's behaviour who said 'You are jugglers. You know how to do these things'.

Although some Roma areas are more privileged, this is not the case for all of the local areas where my participants' lived. The cases of Pericles and Patroclus highlight the additional difficulties they confronted in their local area. They both come from families that are highly respected in their community. Pericles and Patroclus attended the Roma school in their local area. They both recognised that the

quality of the education offered at their school was inferior compared to the mainstream primary schools. Pericles called his school a “ghetto school” (*Pericles*, 131). Their attendance at a separate Roma school had complicated their transition to the mainstream local lower high school, first, in terms of the reduced level of knowledge they had received at the Roma primary school and second, in terms of their socialisation/integration. Patroclus remembers that most Roma students were only sharing a desk with other Roma students. Pericles said (*Pericles*, 153):

I experienced racism at the first grade of lower high school. This had been the first time I had non-Roma classmates and they used to treat us (the Roma) in a different way ... They did not socialise with us during the school breaks, they did not talk to us, they did not share the same desk with us, they did not want to go out with us ... When we were on a school trip, they did not want to take photos with us ... There were these stereotypes ... And I was wondering ‘Why don’t they want me? What is wrong with me? I am a good student, I am well dressed’.

Patroclus’ and Pericles’ stories highlighted some of the difficulties they faced when they attended the mainstream lower high school in an area where relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma were not good, according to their accounts. One factor which facilitated Pericles’ inclusion relates to the contacts he had with non-Roma peers through the football team he joined. He spent time with some of these non-Roma peers as they used to play together, travel and stay together during their football trips. In Bourdieusian terms, Pericles’ social capital – as a form of “possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119) with non-Roma playmates facilitated his educational progression to some degree.

As far as the adverse atmosphere against the Roma in Pericles’ local area is concerned, he noted a significant event of discrimination which happened recently (*Pericles*, 222 - 224):

I was preparing an essay ... I had to e-mail my essay by the deadline given ... I was back home and here, we do not have an Internet Antenna receiver ... Thus, I went to an Internet café in my area in order to submit my essay ... but I was not allowed to enter the internet Café because many cafés do not welcome Roma clients ... I knew that this shop does not welcome the Roma, but I thought that I would be accepted because I am a university student ... However, I was kicked out ... I called the police ... and if I had signed a complaint report, the owner would have been sent to court ... I finally submitted my essay at the police station and thus I managed to be on time ... I have never talked to anybody about this event before ... I did not even dare to report that event to my professors at university ... I was afraid they might look down on me...

At this point, it is relevant to discuss the school attendance of Roma students in relation to the degree to which they are accepted by the local communities. According to Dragonas (2012), separate schooling (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.), such as in the case of Pericles and Patroclus, is an example of Roma segregation in educational settings in Greece. These (primary) schools in Roma areas are officially registered as mainstream schools but in practice only Roma students attend them. Therefore, the existence of these schools indicates the active exclusion of Roma children from schools (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012). In social justice terms, the existence of these schools challenges the concept of 'equality of opportunity' offered to the Roma as, in practice, they do not always have access to the mainstream school (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.). Under these conditions, an education of lower quality may be provided to Roma pupils in separate schools – this was the case for the aforementioned participants, according to their accounts. First, it is important to stress the fact that these two male participants experienced additional difficulties in their educational pathways because they attended this separate Roma school. Second, as detailed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.1.), it is important to underline the conflict between the official rhetoric that speaks to inclusive demands promoted centrally by the Ministry of Education and what happens in practice at local levels: *de facto* Roma schools exist without being *de jure* recognised as such.

Thus, there are limited chances for these schools to be considered in a way which could support Roma students (e.g. through extra funding or special measures to address the education of Roma).

Thus, although I recognise that in practice, ‘separate schools’ might potentially serve as an ‘effective’ short-term solution for the education of Roma children in some locales, it is important to highlight both the low quality of education offered in such schools and the danger of their establishment without the recognition of their status as being separate Roma schools. The lack of valid official data about the existence of these sorts of Roma schools complicates any attempt to, first, explicitly trace the real reasons for these schools’ establishment (e.g. distance from a mainstream local school or segregation?) and, second, describe the current situation as the initial step of understanding the current educational provision for Roma and taking appropriate action for its future improvement.

6.6. Influences of Individual Qualities and Circumstances on Educational Success

6.6.1. Individual Qualities

Certain individual qualities appear to have contributed to the success of my participants. A number of participants identified hard work as a factor in their educational success. Miltiades, Patroclus and Hector distinguished ‘patience’ and ‘persistence’ as features which made the difference to their progression. The role of commitment in achieving success was also emphasised by a number of participants. Theagenes said his friends used to joke because he devoted all his time and energy to studying and said that “Maths and Physics are your girlfriends” (*Theagenes*, 149). Laertes argued that commitment – and not just talent – was a key feature in achieving success. He supported his argument through the example of successful Roma football players in Greece. According to Laertes, although there were many talented

Roma children who played football in his area, only those few who were really strongly committed and persistent managed to become successful football players. As he explained (*Laertes*, 513-515, 529, 530):

In order to achieve a high goal, you have to go through a process ... All of us who achieve distinction in any field - e.g. sports, music or education - have something in common: an attitude towards success which is informed by tenacity, persistence, tactics and commitment to the extent of making sacrifices in order to succeed.

Another feature which was involved in my participants' educational success was their resilient behaviour. As discussed earlier (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5.4.), some (high-risk) students protect themselves, resist adversity (e.g. poverty and discrimination) and succeed in education (Rhamie, 2007; Rutter, 2007; Masten et al., 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Wright, 2011; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012; Brooks, 2013). In my study, some of my participants reported negative experiences at school and in their community, such as a lack of teachers' support and experiences of discriminatory treatment, as with the event reported by Ismene regarding her Physical Education teacher and the event reported by Athena regarding her music teacher (see Section 6.3.1.). These participants have not all referred to resilient behaviours explicitly. However, they managed to overcome these negative events in a way which did not hinder their progression which does suggest that they were able to behave in a resilient manner.

Jason had not reported any noticeable events of discrimination but he said (*Jason*, 38):

Even if these events had occurred, I would have used them in a way that strengthens me and makes me follow a persistent behaviour in order to prove the others wrong.

Athena also said that she was trying hard to focus on her studying. She argued that the negative experiences she had gone through motivated her to progress because she felt she was taking

'revenge' for these negative experiences through her educational progression. After the interview, in her follow-up message, she wrote "The greatest joy in life is to achieve the things the others think you can never achieve". Therefore, in Athena's case, motivation and persistence had a positive impact on her school engagement and performance (Reay et al., 2009; Paloş et al., 2011).

Studies exploring success presented in Chapter 4 indicated the impact the following individual qualities had on educational success: having goals (Rhamie, 2007), strategising (Hoskins, 2012), hard work (Byfield, 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Hoskins, 2012), motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Rhamie, 2007; Paloş et al., 2011) and resilience (Rhamie, 2007, Masten et al., 2008; Reay et al., 2009; Wright, 2011; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). From a Bourdieusian perspective, school success tends to be explained on the basis of familial cultural capital sidelining to some extent any factors of individual talent or achievement (Reay, 2004b). However it is important not to overlook the individual capacities which were reported by my participants as having contributed to their educational success. I now turn to the influence circumstantial factors and events had on my participants' educational success.

6.6.2. Influence of Circumstances

Circumstantial factors, serendipity and luck were not reported as key success drivers by my participants. However, in some cases, these factors contributed to my participants' educational progression. In many cases, it was by chance that some of my participants happened to meet significant others. Examples were reported by Nestor and Antigone whose neighbours were taking care of aspects of their education. Hector met the people from the Organisation 'Dromoi Zois' (Life's Paths), which played a crucial role in his educational progression, while playing in the road. Pylades raised his medical condition (physical disability) as a condition which enabled his

educational progression. He called his disability the present of his life and explained that he thinks his disability brought him 'luck' in a sense that this prevented him from getting married early, which in turn enabled his educational progression.

The focus on circumstantial factors, serendipity and luck as factors involved in educational success also reveals the absence of systematic interventions or policies in promoting the educational success of Roma children in Greece. For instance, Laertes' progression was facilitated by the establishment of Second Chance Schools, as this type of educational institution made completion of compulsory secondary education easier for those like him who returned to school as an adult. Some other participants, such as Ismene and Alcmene, received help from extra state tutorials offered at their schools – tutorials addressing the whole student population. Moreover, Pericles noted that his housing conditions affected his studies in a negative way, as discussed in Section 6.2.1. He was lucky during his school years when his family housing situation changed because they were given a state-funded prefabricated house.

At this point, I should add another circumstantial factor which has influenced my participants' pathways: the current financial situation in Greece. Although these financial conditions were not explicitly highlighted as a factor in educational progression, they inform the construction of educational and professional success made by most participants - as detailed in Chapter 7. Many participants reported that traditional trade occupations are not profitable anymore and Roma people seek more secure jobs. Thus, the exchange value of educational qualifications frequently emerges as important in contributing to the search for a successful educational pathway.

Circumstantial factors, serendipity and luck were involved in my participants' progression. These factors have been reported by other studies (for serendipity, see Hoskins, 2012; for luck, see Gladwell, 2008). In Bourdieusian terms, practices are relations between one's

habitus and one's current circumstances (Maton, 2008); thus, the relationship between a student's habitus with these fortuitous circumstances may lead to certain practices that facilitate educational success. In the cases noted above, specific circumstances facilitated the educational progression achieved by my Roma participants.

6.7. Discussion

In this chapter, I have investigated the factors involved in my Roma participants' educational success. The analysis of my participants' stories drew attention to key influences identified by them as contributing to their success. These influences have been grouped in the clusters discussed earlier and are represented in Figure 6. In the categorisation presented here, some factors are included in more than one category. For instance, 'role models' are included in family factors as successful relatives boosted some of my participants' educational success. However, in other cases, these successful examples have come from the community environment. Thus, 'role models' have been included in the community factors as well. Furthermore, some categories overlap in practice. For example, while some school aspects can be considered as community aspects, here I present 'school' separately as this category's role seems crucial for my study because of my emphasis on the field of education.

Most of my participants' pathways had been facilitated by the fact that their background was relatively 'advantaged' up to a point when compared to other Roma or even by non-Roma standards (e.g. in terms of access to material and cultural goods). In Bourdieusian terms, most of my participants seem privileged in terms of their family habitus and/or in terms of economic, cultural and social capital. However, these participants have not all been privileged in the same way. For instance, Ifigeneia appeared to have been advantaged in all respects (for example, in terms of habitus, economic, cultural and social capital). On the other hand, Pericles, for example, comes from a

poor family. In his case, the family habitus seems the most appropriate explanation for his educational progression. In some other cases where my participants had not been so privileged in terms of family habitus or economic capital, a combination of various factors had facilitated their educational progression - such as an accepting locale or individual features such as resilience as, for example, in the case of participants such as Athena and Pylades.

What might also be observed on the basis of my participants' stories is that there have been no systematic interventions or policies which have promoted the educational success of Roma children in Greece. However, even when small interventions or other educational incentives which include all students – such as the all-day school, state extra tutorials, extra-curricular activities (music, theatre, sports) - took place, they had influenced my participants' progression in a positive way.

The analysis of my participants' stories highlighted the central role that certain factors appeared to play in their educational success, such as receiving familial support, mentoring by teachers, help from significant others, living in a tolerant locale, resilience, working hard and luck. These themes raise other questions: Do these factors constitute the 'recipe' for educational success for Roma? Does access to these 'success factors' always lead to educational success? The evidence would suggest a negative answer to these questions, since cases of Roma who did not progress, despite their having accessed some key success factors – such as those Roma mentioned by Hippocrates or even some of my participants' siblings, illustrate that the success factors reported by my participants as making a difference in their progression are not a 'panacea' for Roma's educational success. Therefore, I think that their being transferred through interventions as a 'recipe of good practices' would fail to reflect the complexities of my study.

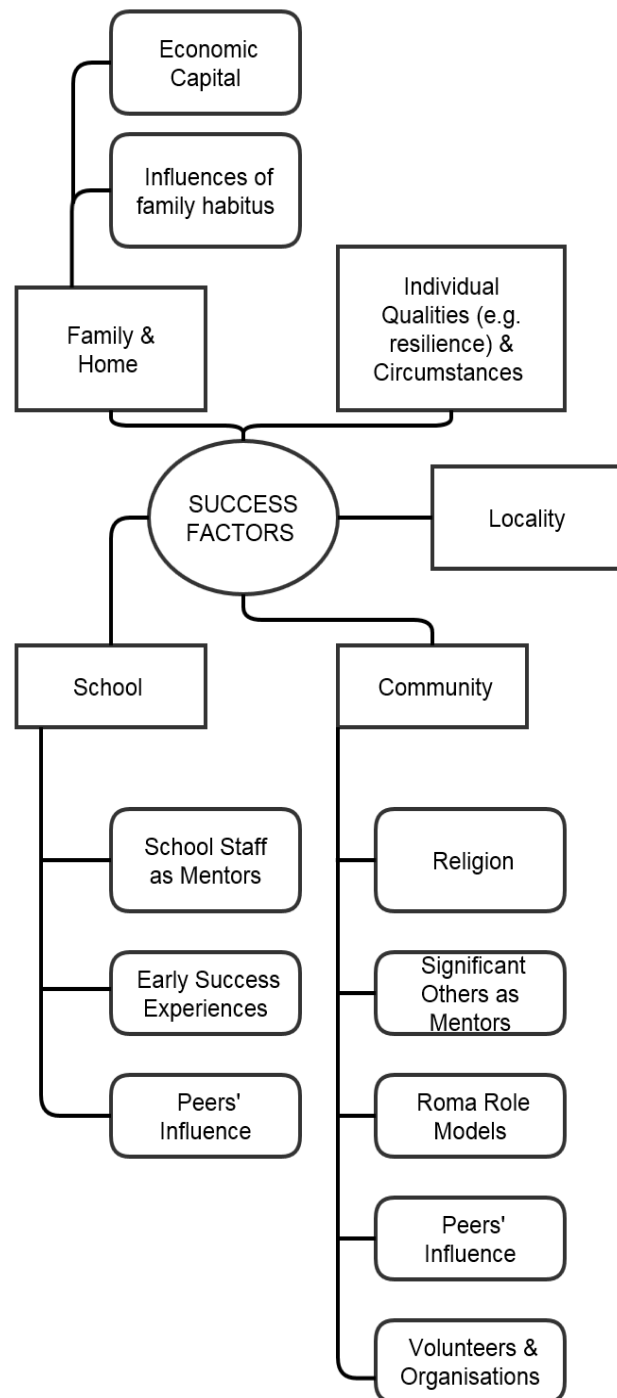


Figure 6. Key Success Factors in Roma's Educational Pathways

To conclude, mapping the factors which resulted in Roma's educational success on the basis of the accounts of people who experienced it covers, to an extent, the lacuna in the existing literature about Roma's educational success in Greece. My participants' cases

challenge stereotypes about Roma being uneducated or undervaluing education and could inform policy discussions about the possibilities for change and social transformation through education (Apple, 2008), aiming at boosting non-privileged students' progression as will be explained in the final chapter.

Chapter 7. 'Educational Success': Perceptions and Experiences

7.1. Introduction

In chapter four, I examined literature related to educational success and I explained why I deploy the term success to refer to Roma's entrance to higher education in Greece. This chapter investigates my participants' perceptions, constructions and experiences of their educational success. Moreover, it examines the part played by sex/gender as an aspect of educational success for the Roma. It is organised around three broad themes:

- Participants' descriptions of educational success
- Participants' experiences of educational success versus their experiences of 'othering'
- Gender issues

In discussing data relating to each of these themes in the following sections, this chapter addresses my second (twofold) research question regarding the ways in which my participants describe educational success and the extent to which they consider themselves to be successful.

I start by focusing on the way my participants described educational success.

7.2. Descriptions of Educational Success

When starting my doctoral study, I used the term educational success in a relative sense, in order to focus on Roma people who have progressed in education against the odds. I considered my participants as successful after having contrasted them with the situation frequently observed in educational settings where many Roma 'fail', as they underperform and drop out (Nikolaou, 2009; Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009).

When I decided to explore cases of Roma who entered university, the term 'educational success' appeared to make sense to me even on an objective basis. This is because of the sought-after character of higher studies in Greece. As explained in chapter 4, despite the current mismatch between holding a university degree and finding a job (Liagouras et al., 2003), in Greek society there has been a long-standing belief in upward social mobility through education (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011). For many decades, higher education has been regarded as the means to improve occupational conditions and social-class positions (Themelis, 2013).

However, early in the interview process, I realised that the use of the term 'educational success' appeared to be understood by my participants in multiple ways. Although I started the interviews with an initial perspective that my participants have 'made it', my participants' views were quite different. As detailed later in this chapter, only eight participants (8/20) explicitly recognised themselves as successful. Before I investigate my participants' perceptions of the concept of success, I need to note that in general, many participants found it difficult to describe 'educational success'. Some participants, such as Ifigeneia and Jason, thought a lot before they expressed their views about the concept of success. Pericles asked me to return to this topic at the end of the interview. Finally, Miltiades said that success is an abstract concept that has a subjective character and has different meanings for different people.

In what follows, I present some aspects of educational success which were repeatedly raised as crucial by my participants. Although, in many cases, my participants talked of features of educational success as interacting, in this chapter I present the most frequently reported aspects separately for reasons of clarity. The way my participants approached educational success echoes the criteria – external, internal and intangible – that Sturges (1999) presented in order to describe managers' perceptions of career success (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.). In order to construct educational success, my participants used: a) external criteria –

such as accessing higher education (12/20 participants) and achieving future professional success after having succeeded in higher education (8 participants saw educational success and professional success as interrelated); b) internal criteria – such as an understanding of educational success in terms of internal cultivation; and c) intangible criteria, such as feelings of ‘recognition and influence’ when they referred to feeling successful. I now turn to the way that higher studies were seen by some participants as a proxy for educational success.

7.2.1. Studying at Higher Education as an ‘Objective’ Indicator of Educational Success

In many studies which examine issues related to educational success, passing specific exams or a student’s achievement in a significant examination serves as a starting point for characterising a student as educationally successful (Rollock, 2007a; Archer, 2008; Ingram, 2009; Ingram, 2011). A similar rationale was adopted by the majority of my participants who related educational success with high-achievement in the nationwide exams taken at the end of high school and with entering higher education. 12 out of 20 participants understood educational success in relation to access to higher education. Hippocrates, Patroclus, Pericles, Pylades, Laertes, Jason, Antigone, Demosthenes, Alcmene, Electra, Nestor and Hector recognised entrance at higher education as an ‘objective’ indicator of educational success. For example, Jason said (*Jason*, 191): “entering university is undoubtedly an achievement of success...”.

However, the way my participants linked higher studies with educational success was complex. Some participants introduced a ‘utilitarian’ rationale which sees higher studies/educational success as a means to achieve professional success. Nestor regarded a university degree as evidence of success which also helps a person’s professional life. I examine the relationship between educational and professional success in more detail below.

Antigone's description of educational success as access to university raised the importance of university studies not only in terms of the academic benefit they offer but in terms of the whole experience of this period (of being a university student) (*Antigone*, 180, 181):

Educationally successful is the person who has entered university ... University studies help your horizons open, teach you how to study... When we talk about Greek Roma, even entrance at university - and not necessarily its completion - is of great importance.

The last words from Antigone's extract introduce a topic that some participants, such as Pericles and Ifigeneia, raised explicitly as follows: 'Are we talking about the educational success of Roma or educational success in general?'. In what follows, I focus on the way educational success is understood when focusing, in particular, on Roma students

7.2.2. 'Relative' Indicators of Educational Success

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.), during the last two decades, special programmes have targeted the school based education of Roma in Greece. Although the attendance of Roma students has been rising (Gotovos, 2002), educational research has documented the difficulties that Roma students still face in Greek schools, such as the high numbers of student dropout and lower attainment levels than their peers (Nikolaou, 2009; Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). Indeed, in many European countries, Roma children remain among the lowest academic achievers (Symeou, Luciak & Gobbo, 2009).

Some participants took the current situation of the school attendance of Roma (e.g. high dropout rates) as a starting point in order to describe educational success. Entering university was not seen as a noteworthy success by Demosthenes as this is achieved by the majority of secondary school students. However, when referring to Roma, higher studies are taken as evidence of educational success because Roma people who study "are an exception to the rule" (*Demosthenes*, Pilot

Interview, 480). Iphicles followed a similar rationale explaining that higher education constitutes success for the Roma as this is unusual for most of them.

Electra had found it strange that journalists wanted to interview her about her entrance to university because she had never felt she had achieved anything exceptional. However, she realises that non-Roma people consider her achievement as evidence of success as the fact that she entered university indicates that there are other options for the Roma. According to Pylades, as long as most Roma drop out, even school attendance is an indicator of educational success. Hippocrates emphasised the role of locality issues in Roma's success. He took access to higher education as an 'objective' indicator of educational success. However, he recognised the 'relative' character of success in relation to each local context. He argued that, for example, in Agia Varvara where Roma live in good conditions, completion of compulsory education would not have been regarded highly enough in order to characterise a Roma as successful because local conditions (such as housing, good family financial situation) enable higher levels of educational progression. However, according to Hippocrates, in other Roma locales, even completion of primary school might constitute success.

Ifigeneia explained that in order to be realistic, she considers the completion of compulsory education as evidence of educational success for Roma. She hopes that, some years into the future, she could describe the educational success of Roma in terms of completion of high school with some promising rates of Roma entrance to university – however she regarded this scenario as too optimistic. Ifigeneia sees success for Roma, in the main, as their following predominant non-Roma patterns in terms of their occupation (*Ifigeneia*, 140):

Successful Roma are those who get qualified to become hairdressers, plumbers, electricians ... those who are qualified enough to exercise a profession different than selling potatoes, onions, melons and watermelons in the street market...

In this context, it seems understandable why both Laertes and Pericles characterised Roma entering university as an 'excess of educational success'. In particular, Pericles explained that if the current situation of high school dropout rates for Roma students is taken into account, then, when referring to Roma pupils, the completion of lower high school and high school constitutes educational success. Thus, entering university is seen as "an excess of educational success" (*Pericles*, 309).

When taking into account that Roma cultural patterns influence how success is understood in the Roma community, money appears to be an aspect of great importance, as some participants, such as Laertes, Demosthenes and Ismene, claim. Laertes noted that even his father still does not see much point in his educational success as long as Laertes does not earn enough money. According to Laertes, his father follows the traditional Roma values where success is related to high earnings and education does not matter. Similarly, some of Ismene's Roma relatives claim (*Ismene*, 129): "You have been studying for so many years and you finally earn so little money? You studied for nothing".

7.2.3. Educational Success and Professional Success: A 'Conflicted' Relationship?

In many cases, my participants saw educational success in relation to professional success and understood these two concepts as being interrelated. For instance, Ismene said that being educated helps a person become professionally successful. For Paris, professional success is achieved when graduates get a permanent (professional) job. Nestor noted that, in his case, educational and professional success were coupled as he earns his living from a profession which is connected with his field of studies.

Hector and Iphicles saw educational success as a means to achieve professional success/access to a good profession.⁷² According to Alcmene, educational success relates to somebody's entering a good profession. Apart from the value of higher studies in terms of internal cultivation, higher studies also offer practical benefits. According to her account, graduates have more possibilities of finding a stable job. For Alcmene, professional success appears to be more important than educational success. In particular, she said (*Alcmene*, 346):

Access to higher education is important ... However, I consider those who graduated from technical high schools successful as well because their diploma makes them eligible to have a good job, to have their own job ... For instance we have many (Roma) males here who are electricians, deal with electronics etc...

For Electra, educational and professional success are also strongly connected (*Electra*, 165):

Professional success and educational success are totally interrelated ... When you are educationally successful, professional success comes more easily, not always, but it is easier to come...

Hippocrates also saw educational success and professional success as interrelated. He said (*Hippocrates*, 88):

Even if you are a trader, you become more successful if you have a good education ... That is why even here where people are traders, there is a 'ceiling' (on what they can achieve), they cannot go further...

Hippocrates supported his argument by giving the example of university departments of Finance and Trade which offer education in commerce and explained (*Hippocrates*, 90):

Education opens the horizons, it helps you change your way of thinking ... When I helped my father (who was a trader), my rationale had been different (from the rationale of my father and most Roma). That is why we achieved more things (compared to the other Roma)...

⁷² My participants did not unpack the term 'good profession'. When they referred to Roma's having a good job, it seemed that, in the main, they referred to aspects such as profitability and stability.

In contrast, for some participants, educational success and professional success are seen as different, not necessarily interrelated, types of success. For example, although Antigone argued that educational success and professional success are often connected, she thinks that there are Roma people who are professionally successful without being educated. Miltiades also argued that educational success and professional success are not necessarily connected. For Pericles, education can play a part in professional success but the two concepts are not necessarily associated. According to Pericles, there are cases of educated people who are not professionally successful and cases of uneducated people who succeed in their profession.

Theagenes sees educational and professional success as different types of success which are not interconnected. In order to support his argument, Theagenes gave the example of successful (uneducated) Roma traders in Agia Varvara. Laertes also talked of successful (uneducated) traders as examples of professionally successful Roma. However, Laertes recognised that even in these cases, the lack of certification or professional knowledge has prevented further success.

In what follows, I refer to the way educational success was constructed in terms of internal cultivation of the self by some of my participants.

7.2.4. Educational Success Seen as Internal Cultivation

Six participants (Ismene, Jason, Alcmene, Electra, Hippocrates and Nestor) described educational success in terms of a person's internal cultivation. For example, Alcmene, for whom educational success and higher studies are correlated, explained that it is not the higher certificate that makes somebody educationally successful; it is the "way of thinking which starts to change (during higher studies) and the critical stance you start to gain" (*Alcmene*, 341). Jason said (*Jason*, 191):

For me, educational success is not the specific knowledge/training on something ... Education relates to cultivating a type of character by developing the positive things...

For Hippocrates, educational success helps the individual “to become a person of mind/spirit” (*Hippocrates*, 85). Finally, Electra eloquently noted (*Electra*, 164): “Educationally successful is the person who is internally educated and is able to internally educate the others”.

Patroclus, Nestor, Theagenes and Alcmene explicitly linked the concept of educational success with ‘intangible criteria’ (Sturges, 1999): ‘recognition’ in terms of gaining respect and ‘influence’ in terms of inspiring others or offering help to others. For instance, Alcmene said (*Alcmene*, 341):

For me, success is when you follow the way you love, when you do what you love, when you complete an educational cycle which is highly recognised by society ... University is a social institution, where you get a degree which certifies that you know some things ... and it has not only to do with knowledge but, as I said before, your way of thinking starts to change and you start to have a critical stance ... and you become able to help the others in society... I think that this is what success is.

This ‘intangible’ approach to educational success was expressed by almost all my participants when they referred to their personal pathways (I detail this theme in section 7.3.2. below).

On the basis of my participants’ perceptions presented above, I could argue that, although ‘objective’ elements, such as access to higher education, appear significant, educational success is not a clear-cut one-dimensional concept. In some cases, traditional Roma values (e.g. the emphasis given to females’ early marriages) seem to play a role in the way meaning is given to the concept of educational success by my participants. In addition, although educational success is often understood as leading to professional success, the relationship between educational and professional success seems more complex. My participants’ understandings and constructions of educational success vary, despite the fact that they are all positioned as being ‘educationally

successful' in my study because they have entered higher education. Next, I turn to my participants' experiences of educational success.

7.3. Educational Success and Feelings of Success

7.3.1. 'Feeling Successful'

The twenty Roma in my sample were selected as cases of educationally successful Roma as they had all entered higher education – in other words, access to higher education was taken as a proxy for educational success in my study. This section explores the extent to which my participants perceive and construct themselves as 'successful' or not.

Eight participants (Hippocrates, Patroclus, Nestor, Paris, Iphicles, Pericles, Pylades and Laertes) describe themselves as successful. For example, Hippocrates said that he feels he has been following a different (superior) trajectory – compared to most Roma - since he entered lower high school. He considers the fact that he entered the department of Medicine and studied 'the science of the sciences' (*Hippocrates*, 9) as evidence of success. Hippocrates said (*Hippocrates*, 148): "Simply the fact that I studied Medicine is a success (per se)". Moreover, Hippocrates feels he is a successful doctor as his medical appointments are frequently overbooked because of the considerable number of patients who ask to be examined by him.

Nestor considers himself to be successful because he had studied a field that he loved. He also sees his continuous intellectual searching as a part of his successful progression as well as the fact that he makes a wider contribution to society through his being involved in research. Moreover, he earns his living through this job. Iphicles feels he has achieved success as few Roma enter higher education. Laertes had not explicitly called himself 'successful'. After he had been selected to take part in seminars addressing the Roma of his locale, he had felt he was

'better' than the other Roma candidates who had applied to take part in these seminars.

These participants' understandings of educational success echo the conceptualisation by Leatz (1993, cited in Hoskins, 2010) where success is frequently conceptualised as a road to be travelled, a journey with the promise of arriving at a destination with the realisation of achievement; these participants feel they have already arrived at 'success'.

In contrast to these eight participants, ten participants (Demosthenes, Theagenes, Athena, Alcmene, Electra, Miltiades, Theaetetus, Hector, Ismene, Ifigeneia) did not perceive themselves to be successful and two participants (Jason and Antigone) did not comment on this topic of 'feeling successful'. Ifigeneia and Alcmene do not construct themselves as successful, thinking that their educational progression has been 'normal'. These two females' narratives indicate that their family habitus is key in explaining their educational success. For Ifigeneia this was because she had never lived in a 'camp', although she considers her parents successful because they have managed to 'dodge' the traditional Roma lifestyle. Ifigeneia emphasised her father's family's intergenerational role in championing Roma's rights and her grandfather's vision to educate his grandchildren. As a result, in Ifigeneia's family, educational progression was presented as the only available option. Although Alcmene, too, saw her educational progression as something "normal" (*Alcmene*, 354), she recognises that others see her educational progression as special because "only few Roma students make it and enter higher education" (*Alcmene*, 357, 358).

Miltiades, Hector, Theagenes, Electra and Ismene noted that they are following a pathway towards success but there are more things they need to do in order to feel successful. For example, Miltiades longs to establish his own pharmaceutical company and create his own family in order to feel successful. Hector wants to complete his studies, continue into postgraduate studies and get a good job. Theagenes is happy with

his current progression but says he will only feel successful when he accomplishes his academic aspirations (*Theagenes*, 325):

When I manage to work, I will be successful. I am dreaming of entering a university classroom one day and teaching and seeing the audience rising and applauding. At this point, I will be successful.

Electra said she will feel successful when/if she completes postgraduate studies, finds a good job and has a happy family. Ismene mentioned that she wishes to study for a Master's degree and work in the field of education. According to Ismene (*Ismene*, 125):

There is no end in education and learning ... Nobody will ever feel educationally successful ... As long as I have in mind to do some more things, I have not become educationally successful...

These narratives show, in the main, an approach to educational success as an ongoing process. However, Ismene highlighted moments of success she had already experienced such as her entrance to university and her graduation day.

Athena has achieved things which, in her view, constitute success – such as “getting a qualification which leads to living decently” (*Athena*, 190). Moreover, Athena recognises that getting her Master's degree and being selected by the Greek State to work for an international organisation represents ‘success of a higher level’. However, she did not call herself successful as she thought she could have done more things.

Finally, Theaetetus' words reveal a modest way of thinking which seems consistent with his being a priest monk (*Theaetetus*, 339, 344, 382):

Who would be able to call themselves educationally successful? ... As far as I am concerned, the more I work in my ministry the less sufficient I feel to complete my duties ... I am not sure that we ever reach a point where we could say that we are educationally successful ... Every time you have something to do, you realise that you need to improve yourself, you need to learn additional things, you need to control your own passions and limit your own weaknesses and this process does not result in your feeling educationally successful.

On the basis of all of the above, I argue that the way my participants perceive themselves as 'successful' appears to be complex. Although entrance to higher education is recognised as evidence of 'objective' success, 'subjective' elements of success are presented as significant in the way some participants construct themselves as successful or not (for example, prestigious studies; owning a company; having many patients; hierarchical progression/promotion). Some participants seem not to feel successful as they think success requires more achievements (such as postgraduate studies; getting a good job); in these cases, my participants' rationale seems to be informed by an understanding of educational success in an intermittent and phased way related to seeing success as a process. Furthermore, feelings of 'being successful' seem to be influenced by culture/ethnicity related discourses as, in some cases, the success achieved is seen in relation to what usually happens in the Roma community. Regardless of the extent to which my participants perceive themselves as successful, 'being regarded as successful by others' (Roma and non-Roma) appears of importance.

7.3.2. Being Recognised as Successful - Helping Others Succeed

A theme which emerged frequently during my data analysis was that my participants are being recognised as successful – in the main inside the Roma community but in the Greek community in general too. Many participants reported that they serve as positive exemplars in their locales. In addition, some participants' educational success was felt to play a role in easing their relationships with non-Roma Greeks. Patroclus said (*Patroclus*, 95, 97) "the others (non-Roma Greeks) treat me equally ... Education might make the difference now... (My being educated) makes me more welcome". Patroclus also receives appreciation inside the Roma community. He said he was thinking of moving away from his Roma area forever but then he started thinking of the ethical obligation he

feels towards younger Roma and his responsibilities to help them get better educated.

This theme of helping younger members of the Roma community was raised by almost all my participants. Some of them try to help other Roma in an active way through participating in political parties. In other cases, Roma participants help other Roma through volunteer tasks. Nestor commented (*Nestor*, 102): “Through my job, I can help and inspire people”. (Nestor conducts research on Roma and was involved in Roma programmes). Paris also enjoys the appreciation of people in his locale while at the same time he is involved as a mediator in a programme for Roma students. Pylades hopes that he can serve as a positive example for other Roma students in the future. His school teachers already use him as a positive example for other Roma students.

Hector is now a volunteer at the organisation to which he attributes a great part of his educational progression. Theagenes highlighted that, in his experience, educational success is more important than his Roma origin (*Theagenes*, 203): “The title of mechanical engineer is stronger than the ‘title’ of Roma”. Although Jason and Antigone are careful about with whom they share the fact of having a Roma background, they have recently started to get involved in programmes for Roma pupils themselves. Miltiades who studied and lives abroad believes that it is very important for educated Roma to come back and help their communities – although he confessed that, personally, he had not made this type of contribution.

Hippocrates receives (Roma and non-Roma) people’s recognition and appreciation in his area and he had been elected as a municipal representative in the past. As a doctor, he had tried to support the Roma through providing free pulmonary function tests (spirometry) for the people of his local area (mostly Roma patients). According to his account, in theory, he serves as an exemplar in his locale; however, in practice, few young Roma continue into higher education.

Ifigeneia is a politician and she tries to help the Roma through her role in her political party. Ifigeneia emphasised her father's family's intergenerational role in championing Roma rights. According to her account, her grandfather was a gifted generous man who helped the Roma community. Ifigeneia highlighted her family's role in achieving a range of positive policies/benefits for the Roma. According to Ifigeneia, first, her grandfather contributed to the policy of Roma qualifying for naturalisation/citizenship in Greece; second, her father supported the welfare benefits that women with many children can now claim, and, third, Ifigeneia assisted the establishment of a system for illiterate people to be able to sit for a driving license (although these last two interventions were universal, they were, in the main, addressing the Roma in Greece).

Laertes regards his Law studies as a tool to help other Roma. By getting involved in Criminal Law and Human Rights, Laertes will combine his job with his will to help the Roma. In addition, his degree will qualify him to defend and advocate for Roma rights (and thereby address their exclusionary experiences) at a European level. Pericles also related his studies (in Social Administration) to his desire to help the Roma; his dissertation focuses on the education of Roma. He also worked with Muslim Roma students (during an internship for one semester) in a programme for Muslim students in Thrace. After his graduation, Pericles - as a social worker - wants to become part of the mediating chain which bridges the Roma and the non-Roma. He also aspires to get involved in politics in an active way in order to help the Roma.

Ismene feels that her relatives and other Roma in her locale are proud of her educational progression and that she serves as a positive example for younger Roma. For instance, she said that when she visits Roma houses, some non-educated relatives ask her to read to their children as if she will give them something important through this educational contact. Ismene also added that her educational progression had influenced in a positive way her younger sisters who now attend technical institutions (further education). Athena also argued that she serves as a positive role model in the area where she was raised as

Roma parents use her name in order to encourage their children to follow her example.

Electra has already participated as a volunteer in extra English lessons offered to Roma students by the priest of their area. She wishes to inspire younger Roma in her area to study and she wants to motivate more Roma children to attend school and help Roma adults to appreciate non-material goods, such as education. Alcmene realises that she serves as an example for the others inside her community and, although she feels that her educational pathway was normal, she receives recognition and respect from others for what she has achieved (for example, they take her views into account).

Finally, Theaetetus tries to help Roma students through his priesthood. For example, he attempted to organise some free evening lessons in his ministry where volunteers would help the Roma children with their homework. Eventually, he did not manage to organise them because this type of lessons fall under the municipality's responsibilities and are not included in Theaetetus' religious tasks. However, Theaetetus has a strong belief in the potential help that the Greek Orthodox religion can offer to the Roma in terms of inspiring them to set long-term spiritual/non-material goals. He disapproves of some priests' attempts to forbid the use of Romani language at Sunday schools because he sees this practice as assimilating. He argued that, although he is not very optimistic for the improvement of Roma's living conditions, the religious ministry is of paramount importance. What he wants for the Roma during the period of crisis in Greece is the following (*Theaetetus*, 192):

What I want for those (Roma) people who have some spiritual concerns is to make sure that there is a person, a community or a space to whom/which they can turn.

To conclude, regardless of the extent to which my participants construct themselves as educationally successful or not, their entrance in higher education seems noteworthy and potentially helpful to others. As Alcmene commented (*Alcmene*, 518-520):

Roma's success stories can help Roma's education because these Roma serve as positive examples; they show that Roma's success can be achieved. Because there is the opposite opinion frequently presented – I have heard it - that 'We are Roma. Are we going to study? Are we going to attend school? These are non-Roma things'. ... (But I am saying) and so what? Why not? Where is the difference? (Education) is a road that we can all enter. There is nothing to hold somebody back ... You (the Roma) just have a different language and some different customs... That's all... These things do not hold you back...

The Roma views Alcmene refers to reflect the idea that Roma's schooling implies a way of 'acting non-Roma'. This rationale echoes Ogbu's concept of 'acting white' (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).⁷³ In contrast to the above views, Alcmene argues that Romaness and school/educational progression are compatible (for more about identity and educational success of the Greek Roma see Gkofa, 2016).

7.3.3. Achieving Educational Success and 'Othering'

Regardless of how my participants feel about their educational progression and success, being identified as Roma by others – both Roma and non-Roma in Greece - affects the way my participants have been treated in some cases.

7.3.3.1. Rejection from the Roma Community?

In some cases, my participants' educational success had been accompanied by some forms of rejection coming from parts of the Roma community. Thus, educational success came at a 'price' for some of my participants; regardless of how they describe their individual sense of belonging, other Roma find that they do not fit into 'Romaness' anymore.

⁷³ Parts of the black community in America used to understand academic learning in school as 'acting white' and academic success as a privilege of white Americans (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). A minority member progressing at school was often perceived as becoming acculturated into the white cultural frame of reference (ibid).

In Electra's case, the cost of her educational progression was the loss of her Roma female peers (*Electra*, 174, 175):

(If I had followed my Roma female friends' lifestyle) and used to go out with them instead of focusing on my homework, I would not have reached this point today ... If I had followed these habits, e.g. wake up at 12 o'clock, not attend school, enjoy my coffee and go around, I would not have achieved what I did ... I preferred to stay alone without friends rather than stay uneducated.

Athena reported that she is not regarded as a 'proper Roma' now that she is educated. Although she follows a mainstream lifestyle, she is neither considered Greek by the non-Roma Greeks nor Roma by the Greek Roma. This is how Athena described her experience (*Athena*, 318, 321, 322):

In our city, they call me 'Rakli'. In Romani language, 'Rakli' means the non-Roma female. For the Roma, I am not a Roma ... I am not like them ... because I am educated. However, I feel Roma ... In practice, I belong to two worlds, a Roma world and a non-Roma world but none of them has accepted me ... For the Roma I am the non-Roma and for the non-Roma I am the Roma.

7.3.3.2. Discrimination by the (non-Roma) Greek Community despite Educational Success?

The argument made by some participants - such as Patroclus, Paris and Theagenes - that 'educational success reduces discrimination against the Roma' was not confirmed in all my participants' cases. Feelings of antipathy had often been revealed when my participants attempted to build relationships with non-Roma partners. Ismene referred to having dated a Greek non-Roma male at university and noted "When I told him about my Roma origin, he disappeared..." (*Ismene*, 31). Moreover, it seems that sometimes a more tolerant locale makes things easier for the Roma while hostile settings result in events of intense discrimination such as those reported below.

Many participants report that they have not been discriminated against as they were raised in local areas where the relationships

between the Roma and the non-Roma had been good. The importance of an accepting locale as well as the process of 'othering' became more evident to them when they went to other parts of Greece. For instance, Theaetetus' family resides in a mixed location (Greek and Roma) where many Roma live. In this area, most people live in very good conditions. Theaetetus was raised in this environment without having felt discriminated against because of his family origin. However, as detailed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.5., p. 178), he and his family had experienced intense discrimination because of their being Roma when they were in another area.

Although some Roma areas are more privileged, this is not the case with the home environments of all my participants. Pericles and Patroclus highlight the difficulties they confronted in their local area where the Roma's 'othering' by the non-Roma had been common practice. They both attended the Roma school in their area. According to their accounts, their attendance at a separate Roma school had complicated their later transition to the mainstream local lower high school, first, in terms of the disparities in their educational knowledge as their first school had not been very good and, second, in terms of their social experiences. Patroclus remembers that most Roma students only shared a desk with other Roma students. Pericles also spoke of events of discrimination he experienced at secondary school (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5., p. 179).

Patroclus' and Pericles' stories highlighted some of the difficulties they faced when they attended the mainstream lower high school in a local area where the relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma were and are still not good, according to their accounts. I highlight these accounts because experiences of non acceptance by the Greek dominant community can hamper Roma's educational success. So much so, that Athena eloquently reflected that (*Athena*, 157):

If I had a second life, I do not know if I would study again ... We, the Roma, do not only have to face the difficulties related to school and homework. In addition, we have to confront those ironic comments and contemptuous eyes; all these things that hurt.

Roma identity recognition can still work in oppressive ways regardless of any educational success. Although some educationally successful participants feel more accepted by the non-Roma Greeks, this had not always been the case. Pericles' story regarding not having been accepted at a local Internet café, which was presented in Chapter 6 (Section 6.5., p. 180), as well as Laertes' narrative below illustrate that Roma's educational success does not necessarily trump society's discrimination against the Roma. These stories also echo Lidaki's argument (1997) that, whatever success the Roma achieve, they are always considered as Gypsies by the non-Roma Greeks.

Laertes complained that despite being a Law graduate, he only participates in Roma programmes as a mediator, conducting projects that other (non-Roma) educated people have planned. In practice, he highlighted that the Roma just serve as the 'tools' to conduct research and are not treated as equal partners despite their being educated: in Laertes' case, his role is always inferior compared to the others involved in the project. He said (*Laertes*, 354):

I am always at the forefront of the research fieldwork. I work with the (Roma) community ... Shouldn't I be the one who is going to suggest the solutions? Should I make suggestions only by being at the forefront? Shouldn't I become an equal partner?

Laertes' story reflects Kostouli's and Mitakidou's (2009) argument that the programmes implemented for the education of Roma are designed by (non-Roma) experts without involving Roma (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.).

The events of discrimination narrated by Pericles (at the Internet café) and Theaetetus (at the police station in Crete) not only highlight practices of the 'othering' of Roma but also raise another significant issue regarding the 'visibility of being Roma': for instance, those Roma people who can be physically recognised (as Roma) by their complexion may be more susceptible to oppressive treatment when they navigate less familiar locations in Greece. Others may find it easier to 'pass' in situations where to be Roma may be to risk discrimination.

In this section, I have highlighted some similarities and differences in my participants' experiences of educational success. Higher studies play a role in the way my participants represent themselves as successful or not. However, discriminatory practices against the Roma frequently influence the way my participants are treated regardless of any educational success achieved.

7.4. Roma Women and Educational Success

We need to focus on Roma girls and Roma women ... There are exemplars of Roma women who have made it, in terms of education, in terms of political involvement, in terms of their occupational progression; but these women have made it after having overcome significant impediments, after having faced great difficulties ... and they have to fulfill many roles in tandem, such as the role of the housewife and the role of mother ... I was really glad that I recently met (Roma adult) women who are registered with second chance schools and aim at entering university.

(Antigone, 192)

In the above extract, Antigone talks of examples of Roma women who have succeeded in education or others who are very active and fight for Roma rights but she claimed that it was hard for them to achieve what they did because they are women. In the previous sections, I examined my participants' perceptions and experiences of their educational 'success' in terms of the way they describe educational success and the extent to which they consider themselves to be successful. During this exploration, gender issues were repeatedly reported by almost all my participants – males and females - (19/20) as influencing the educational success of Roma. When it comes to Roma female participants, it seems that it is harder for many Roma women to succeed in education because of traditional patriarchal cultural values which situate females in specific roles inside the Roma community (Dragonas, 2012). The fact that there are few educationally successful Roma women appears as evidence which could indicate how difficult it is for Roma women to study. According to some data from the European Union Agency for

Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2013), only 6% of Roma women compared with 17% of Roma men aged 16 to 24 years continued education after the age of 16. In this section, I turn to how issues of sex and gender influence Roma females' educational success, focusing, in the main, on my female participants' perceptions and experiences.

In my study, I use the term 'sex' to refer to my female participants' being categorised as women and the implications this might have for the roles they are expected to fulfill; I use the term 'gender' to refer to some of the powerful cultural beliefs inside the Roma community which can work to restrict Roma women compared to men and can result in some roles being considered as less appropriate for them (for instance being educated). Although I recognise that gendered regimes can also pattern the lives of Roma males (e.g. through the Roma man being seen as masculine in the Roma community exercising a manual job rather than studying), such issues were not raised by my participants and are not addressed in my study.

7.4.1. The Educational Success of Roma Women: Male Participants' Views and Experiences

All the educationally successful Roma men in my sample recognised that traditional gendered practices impede the educational success of Roma females. In this section, I cite some of my male participants' narratives in relation to the gendered regimes which seem to still influence Roma girls' educational pathways and Roma females' lives as well.

Nestor reported that if he had been a woman, his educational progression would have been much harder because of the traditional patriarchal beliefs which result in Roma girls' early marriages. Nestor said that when he was young (he is in his 50's now), "the girls who have gone on can be counted with the fingers of the two hands" (*Nestor*, 84). However, he also explained that gendered inequalities had also been a more general feature of Greek society in the past, arguing that continuing

into higher studies had been more difficult for every Greek female. Then, Nestor narrated the two following stories which indicate (in the first case) how traditional gendered practices made educational success harder for Roma women or even impossible (as in the second story).

The Roma girl who continued into education versus the Roma community's disapproval: Nestor talked of one of his Roma female friends who had completed high school and had become a social worker. Nestor noted (Nestor, 91):

She had suffered. Their (Roma) relatives were telling her parents 'What is your daughter doing? Why isn't she getting married?'. It was strongly disapproved (for a Roma girl not to get married early). And so on. So, the Gypsy community plays a crucial role. I do not mean that the Gypsy community is opposite (to education) in advance, but these had been the (prevailing) views.

The Roma girl who had not been allowed by her family to continue her education: Later on, Nestor referred to another Roma family whose daughter wanted to study. However, as Nestor said (Nestor, 93, 94):

Her father had not given her his permission. In contrast, he sent her to learn the art of repairing carpets and she had become a great carpet repairer and appraiser. But I know that inside her soul, she wanted to study, to make it; but her father had not let her. He told her 'You are going to work'.

Although the events Nestor narrated took place two to three decades ago, they highlight the extent to which gendered discourses can prevent Roma girls' educational progression or the price Roma girls may need to pay when they continue with their education beyond the age that is usual for girls in the Roma community. However, Nestor noted that these gendered differences had become blurred in recent times. Hippocrates also mentioned that the gap between Roma boys and girls is smaller today compared to some years ago, arguing that "sex/gender still affects Roma girls' educational progression, but not so much" (Hippocrates, 93). Hippocrates disapproved of early marriages, which, according to my male participants' accounts, seem to affect Roma girls more than Roma boys. According to Hippocrates, "early marriages for

young girls who are about 14-15 years old is something which ‘demeans’ the Roma...” (*Hippocrates*, 200).

Even today, gendered discourses affect Roma girls’ pathways, according to my participants. According to Paris, educational success for Roma girls is very difficult as their parents stop them from attending school and promote early marriage for them. Miltiades also considered sex/gender to be a factor potentially hampering Roma females’ educational progression mostly because of early marriages. Iphicles noted that the fact he is a man helped his educational progression as Roma parents’ priority for their daughters is to get them married early. However, Iphicles argued that, with the passage of time, these gender differences have become smaller and, in general, “time makes the Roma customs decline” (*Iphicles*, 87).

Patroclus argued that sex/gender holds Roma girls’ education back as Roma girls do not have the same opportunities as Roma boys to continue. In particular, according to Patroclus, what holds Roma girls’ progression back is the early marriage that he disapproves of. Pylades also disapproved of conservative patriarchal attitudes in the Roma communities which result in Roma men being regarded as superior. Pericles considers sex/gender a factor preventing Roma girls from educational success as most Roma parents do not let their daughters attend the local high school and cannot think of sending them to another city in order to study. However, Pericles sees a gradual change regarding gendered issues. For Laertes, sex/gender works in the Roma community in the way it used to work in the Greek community some decades ago in a sense that what matters for Roma families is their daughters’ marriages. Laertes’ point about the similarities between the way gender works for the Roma families now and the way it used to work for Greek families some decades ago reflects, to an extent, Vaxevanoglou’s (2001) claim that Roma family structure resembles the family structure of poor Greek families some decades ago (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.).

According to Theagenes too, it is easier for a Roma boy to continue his education than a Roma girl as a more conservative understanding of the dipole 'boy-girl' is evident in the Roma community. Theagenes noted that the Roma community understands the role of Roma females as 'destined' to stay at home. Theaetetus said (*Theaetetus*, 365) that "Roma girls' pathways are certain: A Roma girl must become a wife, must become a mother...". Jason took this argument further by saying that (*Jason*, 199):

The Roma female has a specific role in the Roma community which destines her to stay home and raise the family's children ... Early marriages are still evident ... and encouraged in the Roma culture ... It is not rare to see Roma girls who, at the age of 13, have stopped school and have given birth to a baby.

Before I turn to my female participants' views and experiences, I finish this section with an argument raised by Hector and Demosthenes who emphasised the importance of families' attitudes towards education. Hector mentioned that sex/gender can play a role in limiting girls' progression because of patriarchal attitudes which consider continuous schooling as putting Roma girls' moral behaviour at risk. However, according to Hector, when the family is more open-minded, girls' progression is not hampered. Demosthenes noted (*Demosthenes*, 134):

It is easier for the boys to study, but nowadays it is the same for the girls ... It depends on the family. If the family wants the child to study, the child will study. If the family wants their child to get married, the child will get married at an early age.

In what follows, first, I present my female participants' profiles in more detail and I describe how difficult it had been for me to access them. Then, I turn to their perceptions and experiences on how sex/gender influences Roma female participants' lives and educational success.

7.4.2. Accessing Educationally Successful Roma Females

Establishing contact and negotiating access to Greek Roma who have experienced higher education was a difficult task. First, there are

few Greek Roma who have entered higher education; second, no data for Roma students are held by Institutions of higher education in Greece as the Roma do not officially represent a minority group (Kostadinova, 2011) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). Thus, the Roma have been a 'hard to reach group' (Trevor & Newburn, 2001). As a result, I approached various 'gatekeepers' and 'mediators', such as professors at Greek universities, officials at the Greek Ministry of Education and members of NGOs and Roma Organisations, who helped me to find potential participants. My first set of participants was mainly accessed in Athens where I interviewed ten Roma participants. I observed that there were only two women in this first set of participants. In addition, both my female participants were quite young.

Although I took into account the 'masculinist' culture of the Roma community regarding the roles of women as reported in the Greek literature (Dragonas, 2012), which could perhaps explain the smaller number of female participants, I put extra effort into finding some more educationally successful Roma women; I re-approached mediators and I accessed different 'networks' and gatekeepers in different regions of Greece. My intention was to enrich my sample with more female participants through a new set of interviews which would be theoretically and empirically critical to my work in terms of the sample construction.

Extending my research through interviews with Roma from other regions was also necessary for a number of reasons. First, it would prevent a potential problem that could be created by the fact that the first set of my participants only included those educated Roma – mostly men - within a specific connected network in the more privileged Athens environment. Second, it would contribute to constructing a sample that better reflects the heterogeneity of the Greek Roma, because as explained earlier (Section 2.2.), the Roma in Greece are not a homogeneous group (Markou, 2008; Nikolaou, 2009). Both from my reading (Chapter 2) and my initial set of participants, it was also evident

that gendered differences existed. Thus, I travelled to some areas around Greece where I was able to recruit more participants.

Despite the difficulties in accessing participants, eventually, I managed to interview six Roma women who have entered higher education. Table 7 presents my female participants and basic information for them.

Name	Age⁷⁴	Field of studies	Economic background⁷⁵	Area of origin	Marital Status
Alcmene	25	Philology	Wealthy	Roma area	Traditionally married with a Roma partner
Antigone	25	Political Sciences	Intermediate	Non-Roma area	Single (non-Roma ex-partner)
Athena	35	Nursing	Low-income	Non-Roma area	Divorced, non-Roma partner
Electra	20	Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies	Wealthy	Roma area	Single
Ifigeneia	35	Law	Wealthy	Non-Roma area (abroad)	Married to a non-Roma partner
Ismene	25	Finance	Low-income	Roma area	Living with a non-Roma partner

Table 7. Greek Roma Female Participants

⁷⁴ In order to protect my participants' personal information, I have rounded off their age.

⁷⁵ I have used the description that my participants gave for their family's financial situations as explained in Chapter 6.

The next section considers my female participants' views and experiences on the impact that sex/gender has on Roma female participants' lives and educational success.

7.4.3. Roma Females' Lives and Educational Success: 'Gender Matters'

'Roma women in Greece are the silent actors of the struggle of their community to access the basic Human Rights'
(Antonopoulou, 2011, p. 5)

In the Study on "Combating the isolation of Roma women and girls and promoting their empowerment" *Invisible lives - Roma women in Greece*, Antonopoulou (2011) highlights the barriers Roma females confront in accessing basic human rights because of their disadvantaged position in Greek society as Roma and as women. Thus, first, I explore my Roma female participants' views on the role of sex/gender in Roma's educational success more generally as well as their own experiences in relation to their successful educational pathway.

Before I consider issues related to my female participants' education, it is worth mentioning the prevalence of gendered inequalities in Greek education. A significant improvement has occurred in relation to the educational participation of girls and women in Greece; equal access has been achieved for Greek girls in secondary education and female students now outnumber male students in Greek higher education (Deliyianni-Kouimtzi & Frosi, 2008). However, these improvements have not resulted in significant changes in the occupational and professional status of women (ibid). In addition, although the number of female students has increased, traditional patriarchal attitudes still inform Greek girls' educational choices in relation to the type of studies they pursue. Even today, gendered practices (such as organising students to sit and/or work in gender segregated groups) are often observed at Greek schools

despite the equality rhetoric which predominates (Frosi, 2008). In addition, teachers' traditional attitudes relating to gender seem to influence students' aspirations. Such attitudes include having different expectations of boys and girls or attributing stereotyped traits to boys and girls; for instance, seeing girls as not inclined to deal with technical issues, boys as performing better than girls in Science or suggesting that girls who perform well in Maths are hard workers, whilst boys who do so are intelligent (cited in Frosi, 2008).

Turning more specifically to female Greek Roma, patriarchal attitudes and traditional gendered regimes still significantly affect their lives in Greece (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). Roma women in Greece face multiple forms of discrimination related to their being women and their being Roma (Antonopoulou, 2011). In the Roma community in Greece, "there is a persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles of women" (Dragonas, 2012, p. 5). My study, however, problematises these claims as some – although few – Roma women have succeeded in education. Thus, the situation seems to be gradually changing – an argument which was also made by Hippocrates, Iphicles, Pericles, Demosthenes, Athena, Alcmene and Ismene.

However, even my participants report experiencing different expectations for Roma according to their gender. Roma boys are frequently treated as being 'superior' to Roma girls. Electra said (*Electra*, 166):

In the Roma community, there is a great difference between boys and girls. Girls are 'devalued' compared to boys. If a boy says 'I want it', then it is done; if a girl says so, her opinion does not count ... And of course it has to do with each family, because if a girl learns from early on that 'He is the man. You are a girl. Sh!'...

As far as school attendance is concerned, in the Greek Roma communities, girls usually stay at home and are not expected to progress at school (Antonopoulou, 2011). Sex/gender frequently serves as a barrier to Roma girls' educational progression, according to both my male

and female participants. For example, Ismene thinks that it is easier for Roma boys to progress. She said that what is observed in the Roma community in terms of gendered behaviours is probably the case in many traditional societies where women occupy a subordinate position.

Traditionally, Roma women have not had the option of an 'independent life', away from a male guardian (such as father or husband) (Antonopoulou, 2011). Furthermore, Roma traditional customs do not recognise equality between the two sexes (ibid). Ismene noted that the man is the 'head' in every setting and every arena to the extent that women follow men's decisions even at great personal cost (*Ismene*, 136):

Women follow the men ... I can see my female cousins who tolerate unpleasant things ... They are unhappy ... They have done nothing for themselves and they will not even do ... They have never enjoyed going to the sea, drinking a coffee outside, going on holidays ... Unfortunately, it is always the man who arranges everything...

In contrast with the role of the Roma male as the 'head' of the family, Roma females learn the role of 'housekeeper' from early on. Antigone referred to an event she experienced at a summer camp when a young Roma girl wanted to wash not only her clothes but her older brother's clothes as well. Electra also said (*Electra*, 166):

A very important thing for girls is to learn to do the housework even from an early age. This immediately becomes a limit ... Girls realise that this is their role and they should learn it from early on.

Electra claims that the fact that domestic tasks are assigned to Roma girls differentiates them not only from Roma boys but also from Greek non-Roma girls. Electra noted (*Electra*, 89):

When a non-Roma girl of my age comes back from school, she probably tidies up her room and studies. (When we come back from school), we have to tidy up the house, cook and then study. We have some responsibilities. Many (non-Roma) girls at my age do not know how to cook, tidy-up, iron ... For us (the Roma), this would have been a shame! The others (the other Roma) would laugh at you. Thus, you need to be responsible from an early age.

Another point that needs to be made here is the emphasis given in the Roma community to the moral attitudes of Roma women. Athena said that sex/gender plays a role in the Roma community in the sense that conservative patterns are still evident for the Roma women as far as relationships and the management of sexuality are concerned (*Athena*, 220):

Girls are weak inside the Roma world ... My progression would have been easier if I had been a boy ... When my grandfather was telling everybody how proud he felt of my joining the army (military higher studies), the other Roma were laughing at him, saying that I would just go to Athens to sleep with the army officers.

Alcmene said (*Alcmene*, 375):

Maybe sex/gender is a more general issue ... in terms of ethics ... it is a moral issue ... for the girl not to go out, not to become infatuated (with any guys), not to provoke the others' comments on where she goes and why she is out and stuff like that ... The case for boys is not such...

Alcmene's claim echoes what is argued in the report on "Combating the isolation of Roma women and girls and promoting their empowerment" Invisible lives - Roma women in Greece' (Antonopoulou, 2011): early marriages are promoted in order to prevent Roma girls from premarital sexual relationships. Early marriage as a traditional Roma practice which prevents Roma girls' schooling was raised as an important topic by many participants, such as Hippocrates, Paris, Pylades, Jason, Miltiades, Theaetetus and Alcmene. Alcmene argued that sex/gender becomes a barrier for Roma girls' educational progression if/when Roma girls enter love relationships (*Alcmene*, 370):

Sex/Gender has an influence if you want to get married, not before ... I do not think that it plays a role earlier, but if you want to be in a relationship with somebody, a boy could more easily continue his education compared to a girl.

Furthermore, Alcmene said that Roma husbands do not often encourage their wives' studies and when a baby comes, continuing into school becomes harder as expectations of their role relate to motherhood.

In contrast to the gendered discourses to which most participants referred, Ifigeneia highlighted the significant role of family attitudes towards sex/gender by saying that those Roma parents who want their child (boy or girl) to get married early promote early marriages regardless of the child's sex. Indeed, the family attitudes towards education and sex/gender appeared of great importance in the educational success of my female participants - these family attitudes had been coupled with other factors and eased my participants' educationally successful pathways, as argued in Chapter 6.

In Ifigeneia's case, educational progression had been presented as the only available option for her. Somewhat unusually, it had been her grandfather's vision to educate all his grandchildren – both males and females. Her four older siblings had all been educated. Her parents had also served as positive examples for her as they moved away from a traditional Roma lifestyle and wanted their children to become educated. For Ifigeneia, it is the parents and their expectations that influence children's progression, their sons' and daughters' (*Ifigeneia*, 70):

Parents play the most significant role (in their children's progression); it is their persistence, their vision, their goals which matter the most.

Athena highlighted the fact that her parents believed in education. They believed that their daughter would be able to access a better future through education - emphasising the exchange value of education and her family's will for upward mobility. Athena explained that her parents' educational expectations resulted in their making sacrifices in order to ensure she had the school materials she needed (*Athena*, 33):

Even at times when we were struggling for food, my mother was prioritising my having a school bag and sports clothes ... She was even begging on streets or going from house to house to read coffee cups (to get the money needed)...

Electra explained that, although, as a girl, she used to be more responsible for domestic tasks in comparison with her brother, these

differences were slight and had not affected her educational progression (*Electra*, 167):

(Our family) had not taught us that we, as girls, have fewer rights than our brother who is a boy. We were all equal regardless of being girls or boys. However, my brother would never do the housework ... My grandmother would ask me to mop ... She would not let my brother mop ... Do you see my point? However, we did not have significant discriminations...

So, even though there are always some different expectations, it is the kind of gendered regimes which matters the most. In Alcmene's and Electra's local area, a Roma Female Association is active in fighting for Roma children's education. The positive attitudes towards education and some small-scale educational interventions in this area might have promoted an 'ethos' which facilitated their progression when coupled with their families' positive attitudes towards education. In addition, there is a university near the area where they live and so they can continue to live at home while studying. Thus, the context might have facilitated progression in cases such as Alcmene's; Alcmene continued her studies regardless of being married and having a baby while studying. Alcmene recognises that her Roma partner – although uneducated - had been very supportive during her studies and so she was able to study and raise her own family at the same time.

Although all my female participants had progressed to higher education, Ismene and Electra seem to have experienced some pressure while progressing because of more traditional gendered patterns around them. In Ismene's case, her Roma aunties had been against her living away from home in order to study because they share more traditional-patriarchal attitudes. In contrast, Ismene's father's open-mindedness made the difference for her. As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.2.), this is what Ismene's father used to tell her (*Ismene*, 6): "Go, try, do, be active, study... I will stand by you...". In addition, in some cases, such as that of Electra (see Section 7.3.3. above), educational success came at the cost of experiencing the disapproval of other Roma (loss of Roma female friends in Electra's case).

To sum up, my female participants highlighted the ways in which traditional gendered regimes still influence many Roma females' trajectories. Thus, sex/gender frequently serves as an additional barrier to their progression. However, a gradual change observed in Roma's attitudes in relation to sex/gender is explicitly reported by half of my female participants - Alcmene, Ismene and Athena - who argue that the gap related to sex/gender differences is gradually being narrowed.

In my female participants' cases, sex/gender had not served as a barrier against their educational success. In Bourdieusian terms, my female participants' 'family habitus' seems to have made a difference to their progression; their families' positive attitudes towards education 'matched' the field of education and enabled their progression. Even when gendered patterns of hierarchy and exclusion were evident in the surrounding Roma community, the community habitus had not proved strong enough to stem their educational progression (such as in the case of Ismene's aunts and Electra's Roma female friends): Ismene's father's positive attitude towards education predominated (over the patriarchal expectations of their relatives), while Electra avoided socialising with Roma girls who dropped out from school. Thus, in these two cases, some of the 'dark aspects of social capital' (Field, 2003) were sidestepped.

7.4.4. Discussing the Role of Gender

According to my female participants' accounts, patriarchal and traditional gendered expectations still pattern many Roma female lives and frequently hinder Roma females' educational progression. However, my six female Roma participants have managed to succeed in education. Gendered expectations had been evident in some cases such as the cases of Ismene and Electra, but, even then, my female participants have escaped the limits usually confronted by Roma females.

The socio-economic background of my female participants is an important factor that facilitated their educational success. Four of the six Roma female participants who progressed to higher education come from

wealthy family backgrounds. However, even in the cases of Ismene and Athena who characterised their families as 'poor', their families had been permanently settled and owned their houses. In all cases, the key factor documented as having facilitated my Roma female participants' educational progression had been their positive family attitudes towards education as well as the family's high aspirations for educational success. These Roma participants and their families resisted some of the traditional gendered patterns that limit the emancipation of Roma girls and women, such as early marriages. In Bourdieusian terms, the family habitus as well as assets of high economic capital and cultural capital and in some cases social capital played a crucial role in my female participants' progression.

In the cases of my female participants, it became evident that their 'being Roma' did not necessarily equate to a disadvantaged position at school (and in society more generally). Four out of six of my Roma female participants come from relatively wealthier backgrounds. Thus, these female students have not suffered economic injustices; they have not experienced the exclusion and the limited access to material goods of the majority of Roma community. In contrast, these female participants have had access to those forms of cultural capital that are appreciated and rewarded at school. Thus, it had not been difficult for them to access and occupy a more powerful position in the field of education which facilitated their educational success. The case of these four wealthy Roma females reflects, to some extent, the argument made by Skelton et al. (2007) and Mirza (2009) that the effect of social position/class on achievement is greater than gender or ethnicity. However, the cases of Athena and Ismene seem different from the other female participants as these two participants come from low-income family backgrounds. In these cases, family habitus and assets of strong cultural and social capital appear of great importance. In Athena's and Ismene's families, education seems to have been seen as a strategy to improve their social position.

Moreover, where they lived facilitated the educational progression of my female participants. Living outside a Roma area seems to have made educational progression easier for Roma girls such as Ifigeneia, Antigone and Athena who were mainly exposed to the mainstream Greek lifestyle. In every case, all my female participants – as well as my male ones - had lived in or near urban areas, a fact which may have facilitated educational progression as, according to Mylonas (2006), high achievement in Greece relates to living in geographically privileged areas (as signalled in Chapter 6).

Taking into account that, in general, gendered inequalities still influence women's educational lives in Greece makes my female participants' educational progression seem more significant. These Roma females have overcome difficulties related to experiences of double discrimination because of their sex/gender and Roma background both inside and outside the Roma community. However, although my female participants' achievement is undeniable, it raises issues which need consideration: my female participants have followed studies which are consistent with more traditional feminised fields (humanities, occupations involving care). What does this mean for their success in relation to sex/gender? Do gender patterns still predominate and determine Roma females' education and choices even when they progress? Do my female participants find themselves located in a feminised division of labour? What is the value of their educational success and its implications when educational success is not accompanied by a successful professional pathway and access to more powerful positions? These questions are valid for the majority of Greek female graduates as well. Thus, the situation may be much more difficult for the Roma females who confront problems related both to their sex/gender and their Roma heritage.

To conclude, it is evident that my Greek Roma educated female participants all constitute exceptional cases inside the unusually exceptional group of Roma who successfully navigated their way through higher education. Even though gendered perspectives are still evident in these female participants' stories (such as the 'feminised' subjects

studied at university), my participants' stories show that change is occurring in relation to the gendered attitudes and practices of Roma. Thus, my female participants appear as 'pioneers'. These Roma females seem to be 'change bearers' and education is involved in this change. The need for educational interventions to address the specific needs of Roma women was emphasised by participants such as Pericles, Theaetetus, Antigone and Jason. Pericles said: (*Pericles*, 320):

If the Roma girls continue their education and avoid early marriages, the Roma boys will necessarily follow the same pathway.

Finally, Theaetetus emphasised the critical role of females in the Roma community's change as he argued that educational interventions should address Roma women because even if they do not study themselves, they will transfer their vision to the next generation (*Theaetetus*, 365):

The Roma society is 'matriarchal' ... Inside the Roma family and the Roma community, the Roma woman handles everything ... However, because of the (uneducated) Roma women's poor experiences and low expectations/limited horizons, their attitudes limit their children's visions ... The Roma mother has so much power inside the Roma family and community that she determines her children's choices to a great extent.

7.5. Discussion

This chapter has focused on the perceptions, constructions and experiences of my educationally successful Roma participants concerning their 'educational success'. Educational success was not understood in a single way by my participants. Higher studies were frequently seen as an 'objective' indicator of success but other 'relative' aspects, such as values in the Roma community, also informed the way educational success was perceived. The interplay between educational and professional success was also raised. Indeed, educational success was presented as a complex construction not easily understood, described and explained.

Moreover, some participants presented themselves as successful and others did not. One point emerged relating to the way Roma are 'othered' - regardless of any achievements or educational success. Although, in some cases, Roma's acceptance by the dominant Greek community seems to be accomplished when educational success is achieved, the significant events of exclusion against some of my participants underline the continuance of anti-Roma prejudice in Greek society. Thus, some Roma choose not to talk about their Roma background as Romaness may be seen by the non-Roma as a demeaning aspect of their identity. However, educational success itself may sometimes result in participants' being 'othered' even by (non-educated) Roma who do not regard some of my participants as 'proper Roma' anymore.

The chapter has also demonstrated that gender regimes have also shaped my participants' understanding and experiences of educational success. Briefly put, sex/gender intersects with Roma background making Roma females more 'vulnerable' to discriminatory practices within both the Roma and the mainstream Greek (non-Roma) community which still impede Roma females' educational success. Gendered practices can be identified in my female participants' pathways (such as the 'feminised' fields of their studies). However, the women in my sample appear as 'pioneers' showing that change is occurring in relation to Roma's gendered attitudes and that education gets and needs to get involved in this change. Therefore, it can be argued that as regards Roma females' educational success, education contributes to achieving social change and social transformation (Apple, 2008).

Before I move onto my next substantial data chapter, as a coda to the work on gendered identity, I need to make one last point: other identity aspects also intersect in ways which affect Roma's educational success. Although in this chapter I did not explore identity matters, discourses related to identity aspects such as age, socio-economic background, religion, disability and locality are likely to interact with Romaness in ways which affect Roma's educational progression in

complex ways. For instance, younger Roma girls might experience less discrimination compared with the discrimination older Roma females have experienced in the past. Roma in relatively poor living conditions might experience vulnerability because of their cultural background and their financial situation. Muslim Roma might be at a higher risk of discrimination because both their religion and their Roma background are viewed as outside the mainstream in the Greek society. In Pylades' case, his physical disability prevented him from getting married early which eased his schooling and studies. Finally, Nestor gave an example showing the importance of locality issues (specifically, living in a Roma area or not) in relation to Roma background influencing Roma's lives and educational progression (*Nestor*, 84):

I was somehow lucky because I was outside Agia Varvara⁷⁶ (Roma area). If I was in Agia Varvara, I do not know if I would have continued. And I say that because they would have brought a girl for me – having good intentions - 'You will get married', they would have pushed me and probably this would have been my story. There was a crucial impact of the marriage and the love relationships on the Gypsies.

⁷⁶ Area in Athens where many Roma have lived for years. As noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.), Agia Varvara is one of those regions where the Roma live in good conditions (Markou, 2008).

Chapter 8. Educational Success for the Roma in Greece: Suggestions for Policy and Practice

8.1. Introduction

During the research interviews, my participants did not just discuss their own educational experiences; they also expressed their views, ideas and suggestions about what actions need to be taken so that more Roma pupils can succeed in education. This last data chapter addresses my third research question by analysing my participants' suggestions for improving educational provision for Roma students in Greece. In this chapter, I draw on social justice concepts in order to better understand my participants' suggestions. I start by presenting my participants' views on the role education plays/can play in Roma's lives.

8.2. The Importance of Education⁷⁷ for the Roma

Before I turn to the specific suggestions my participants made for improving Roma education, I need to stress that all my participants consider education important for individual development and for the future of the Roma community as well. For instance, according to Ismene, 'education makes you better'. Ismene used the example of her mother not having been educated to claim that education 'equips' an individual and makes them feel complete. In particular, she said (*Ismene*, 220):

Education⁷⁸ is the most important thing ... It is the only way to describe what you want and who you are ... to make yourself complete, to open your mind ... and make you take the further step ... Why has my mother not travelled? Why hasn't she enjoyed anything in life? ... Just because she had not been to

⁷⁷ At this point, I need to refer to some language issues: in some cases, during the interviews, my participants used some Greek terms which cannot always be precisely translated in English. For instance, in this section I deploy the term 'education' in order to make the point that most participants emphasised the significance of academic progression and (typical) education for the Roma. However, in some cases my participants referred to education by using Greek terms which go beyond schooling and training and relate to a person's wider intellectual development and internal cultivation. I discuss key language issues arising in my study in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7.).

⁷⁸ Ismene used the term *paideia*/*παιδεία* at this point.

school ... Her mind never opened ... She never saw/experienced something more ... She just got married at the age of 17 years old and now she fights tooth and nail to raise her children ... and it is not only in relation to (material) goods ... What you feel inside is the most important thing ... Why should you feel inferior compared to the others? ... (Without education) you will always be incomplete and unable to feel free.

Ismene's narrative draws attention to the distributional injustice to which her mother has been subject (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002). Her mother's lack of access to basic material and intellectual goods, such as schooling, prevented her development and her having lived an easier life. According to Alcmene, education makes an individual more able to make a contribution to the society (*Alcmene*, 290):

Education is very important for everyone ... for yourself, your family and your society ... You see everything in another way ... You can take part in social activities ... You can help the others ... you can help your kids ... you can choose a profession which leads to higher earnings...

Hippocrates, Nestor and Pericles talked of the importance of education for the Roma community in a way which understands education as a vehicle for social mobility. Hippocrates said (*Hippocrates*, 172, 173):

Lack of education hinders inclusion ... All the others result from lack of education. If the Roma had continued their education, they would not have got married so early, they would not have all become traders...

Nestor claims that education plays a crucial role in improving life. Pericles highlighted the significance of education in a person's life as follows (*Pericles*, 257):

For me, education is the eyes which make you see ... It is everything ... it is the most important thing, such the keystone of a building ... Education is the most important thing in life especially for people coming from different cultural groups...

According to Pericles, education is the only way to enable the Roma to improve their living conditions. He explained that education empowers people coming from different (disadvantaged) groups as, through education, they can find out about their rights and claim them.

Moreover, educated Roma may access powerful positions through which they can help to improve the living conditions of Roma. In particular, he said (*Pericles*, 260, 261):

Education is the means which can lead the Roma community to success; it can result in achievements which could not be realised otherwise ... Education leads to (the exercise of) power.

From the above, I could argue that education is important for the Roma in terms of a) their individual well-being and fulfillment, b) improving living conditions, c) advancing social positions and d) empowering them. In the following section, I turn to the way my participants see the role of the teacher in relation to Roma's future educational progression.

8.3. Teachers' Contribution to the Future Educational Success of Roma

Teachers are those who come after parents ... Teachers can determine their students' lives, I believe that ... If you are the one who has the chance and the advantage to light a child's life, do it! And there are such teachers...

(*Ismene*, 252)

The contribution of teachers and other educationalists to most of my participants' educational success (17/20) was discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.1.). In the literature, it is reported that teachers play a key part in their students' academic achievement (Vandevoort et al., 2004). For instance, in Byfield's (2008) study, teachers were recognised as having contributed significantly to her black male participants' progression. My participants highlighted the significance of the contribution of teachers to the educational pathways of Roma when they made recommendations for policy and practice as they spoke of the potential impact of the teacher in the progression of Roma. In what follows, I explore the main aspects through which teachers are seen by my participants as contributing to the educational success of Roma. In

particular, I will explore how teachers are seen as playing an important part in Roma's progression; how some go beyond the classroom to help their Roma students; how their being aware of Roma's cultural heritage can contribute to their being more effective; how their attitudes towards their Roma students and their relationship with them affects their students' progression. I also explore how some of my participants' negative experiences involving teachers highlight the role that informed (and culturally responsive) teacher training can have for the educational success of Roma. Moreover, the conflict between treating the Roma students equally (to all the other students) but also fairly (e.g. being aware of their cultural heritage) is also emphasised by many participants.

According to Electra, the teacher is a helper and a mediator (*Electra*, 154):

The teacher's role is the most significant (factor) in a student's progression. Your teacher is the one who helps you develop ... helps you become cultivated, he is the mediator. The teacher is the one who offers you exemplars, who provides behavioural norms ... You spend so many hours with your teacher.

Iphicles said that the teacher is the one who is going to 'inspire' students to love learning. According to Theagenes, teachers' support of Roma pupils is significant for their educational success. Furthermore, for Ismene, the teacher should offer the Roma student an extra push and give Roma pupils extra incentives in a discrete way. Miltiades takes this argument further when arguing that the teacher's offer should not be limited to inside the school and the school timetable. As detailed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.1.), some of my participants' teachers had exceeded their professional role in order to support their Roma students (e.g. the present Alcmene's teacher gave to her; the behaviour of Pylades' head teacher). In addition, Jason argued that it could be beneficial for the education of Roma if teachers knew more about the Roma children's cultural heritage, background and living conditions. Jason's argument echoes Hatzinikolaou's (2007) point that when the teacher understands the Roma students' environment, close relationships are created between the school and the community which contribute to the inclusion of Roma children. Antigone suggested that in areas/schools

with many Roma children, it could be helpful if teachers could speak some Romani words in order to show some awareness and respect for their students. As noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.2.), the Romani language is not used in any type of schooling, programme or interventions addressing Roma students in Greece (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). Finally, Alcmene highlighted that the teacher's contribution becomes more significant when the students come from disadvantaged backgrounds (*Alcmene*, 291, 294, 295):

Isn't the teacher the basic axis of education? ... The teacher is the one who will give you the zest and the 'equipment' to go on and will indicate the options you have in front of you and the alternatives ... In the case of Roma children, where the Roma family might not be so supportive, the teacher's role becomes much more important...

The significance of the teacher is revealed when some participants complained about their teachers' attitudes and practices towards their Roma students. For instance, according to Ismene, teachers often have low expectations for their Roma students. As a result, these teachers become indifferent and do not take Roma students' education seriously. Ismene regards such teachers' behaviour as leading to a vicious circle which traps Roma students in under-achievement leading to their dropping out. Ismene's argument echoes Mitakidou and Tressou's (2007) study where some Roma mothers had argued that teachers' low expectations and pity for their children's living conditions - what Ladson-Billings (2002) calls 'permission to fail' - can discourage Roma children's school attendance and progress.

Electra claimed that a good relationship between a teacher and their Roma students can prove crucial for the progression of Roma or even for their school attendance. As Electra put it (*Electra*, 155):

If you don't like a teacher, then you ignore his subject ... Or, in my case, if a teacher has had discriminated against me, I would not have liked to attend his class...

Athena made a similar point when she emphasised the need for teachers to accept diversity and realise that being different is not

negative. Moreover, Athena highlighted the need for teachers to treat Roma children as children and not as Roma. Athena noted (*Athena*, 159):

They should treat the (Roma) child as a child and not as a Roma ... They should accept the Roma children and then teach them ... You cannot teach if you hold racist attitudes ... These children will never learn through these teachers (who have not accepted them first).

Alcmene implied that many teachers do not want to work with Roma children. Her argument reflects Nikolaou's claim that (2009, p. 550), "it is assumed that many educators hold hostile attitudes towards Roma". This is what Alcmene said (*Alcmene*, 296, 297, 298, 300):

When it comes to Roma's education, many teachers are not willing to work with Roma children or in most cases they are not well-prepared to get involved in Roma students' education ... (And this is something that needs to be taken into consideration during teachers' education and training).

Antigone recognised some shortcomings in teachers' training. She stressed that teachers need to be able to address particular social groups such as the Roma. Antigone's argument echoes Paleologou's (2004) point that there is a need for teachers in Greece to be trained in intercultural issues. Mitsis (2009) also recognises that some teachers are unaware of issues relevant to Roma's education. Indeed, Theaetetus gave an example of some teachers' unawareness about their Roma students' background and living conditions: a teacher had sent a written message to a Roma student's mother about what to do for homework without taking into account that the mother was illiterate herself.

In contrast, Nestor recognised the attempt some teachers make to help Roma students who live in poor conditions, to the extent that he called them 'heroes'. However, some of these attempts are not effective, according to Nestor, because of the various and multi-faceted problems Roma confront. To an extent, Nestor's argument reflects Bernstein's words that 'education cannot compensate for society' (Bernstein, 1970). In particular, Nestor said (*Nestor*, 95):

If the case is an impoverished Gypsy community, the teacher will not be able to deal with the students' social problems and resolve

them ... The teacher expects a child who lives in a house, who has a proper family status and gets this child in order to offer/transfer educational goods. However, in most cases, we have Gypsy communities where the children live in tents, they live in huts, they do not have electricity, they do not have food, their parents move around. Under these difficult circumstances, the teacher finds it difficult to respond. And those teachers who fight to give these children whatever they can inside the classroom are heroes.

In this section, I have drawn on my participants' suggestions to improve Roma educational experiences in relation to changes in the teachers' education and pedagogy. In what follows, I turn to my participants' suggestions on how to improve Roma's educational provision in Greece.

8.4. Participants' Suggestions for the Improvement of the Educational Provision for Roma

Almost all my participants highlighted the need for specific targeted interventions in order to help Roma pupils' educational progression. In some cases, it was argued by some of my participants that Roma students have – at least at an official level - equal opportunities with the Greek (non-Roma) students to access and progress in education. However, Pericles, who attended a Roma primary school, challenged this argument that equal chances are offered to Roma students by detailing the conditions of his separate Roma school. Nestor, Hippocrates and Laertes explained that even when equality is part of the rhetoric of official policy, this is not always enough in order for Roma pupils to follow educationally successful pathways in practice. According to Laertes, Roma children do not really have equal opportunities for educational progression and thus “unequal measures are required in order to compensate for this/achieve equality for the Roma” (*Laertes*, 340). Hippocrates argued (*Hippocrates*, 149, 152, 153):

‘Equality’ is not enough ... because of the Roma mentality and the lack of the appropriate parental support ... The equality ‘officially offered’ does not compensate for the deficits coming from the (Roma) family environment.

I now turn to the main interventions my participants believed were required for the improvement of the education of Roma.

8.4.1. Type of Interventions

Although all my participants recognised the need for interventions in order to support and promote the educational success of Roma, they expressed different opinions about what these measures would look like. The variety of the interventions suggested and the different areas mentioned in the interviews makes any attempt to group my participants' ideas difficult. Figure 8 summarises my participants' main suggestions for interventions which are discussed in this chapter.

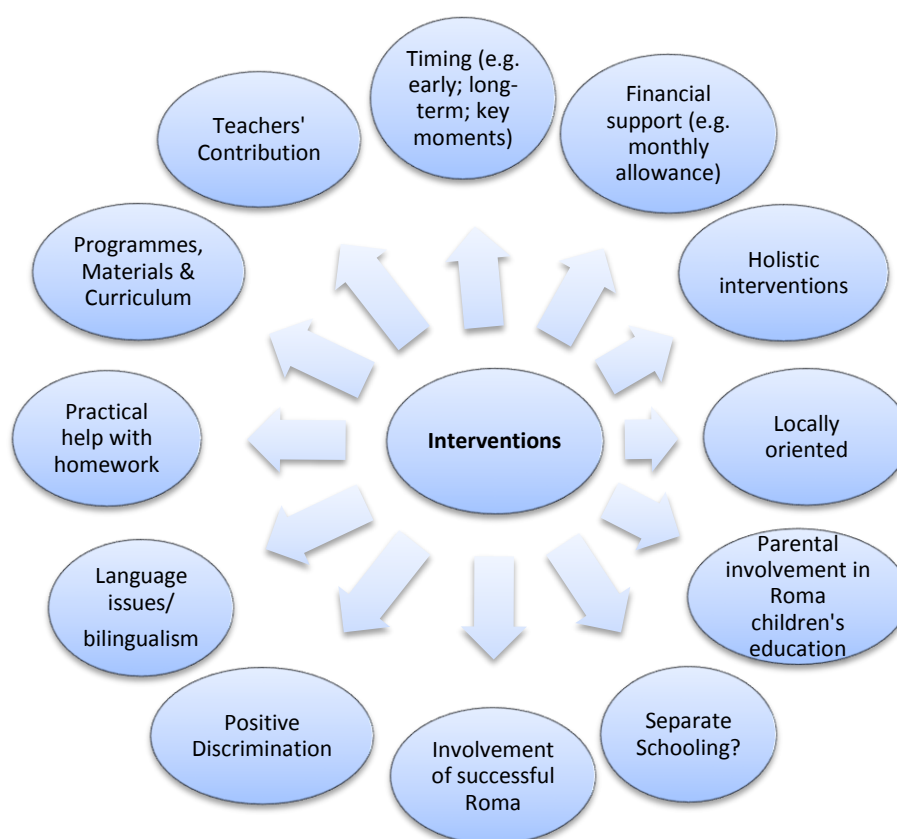


Figure 8. Participants' Suggestions on How to Improve Education for Roma in Greece

8.4.1.1. Appropriate Timing for Interventions: Many participants focused on what would be an appropriate time to take action. First, the usefulness of early interventions was raised by some participants, such as Paris and Antigone. Patroclus emphasised the need to provide special

measures for Roma's education in their pre-school years. It is worth noting that some of my participants had not attended any type of pre-school education. Although one year of attendance at nursery school (at the age of 5 years old) became compulsory in Greece in 2006,⁷⁹ the attendance of Roma in pre-school education is still limited (Dragonas, 2012). Roma children have the lowest rate of preschool experience in Greece (20%) compared to other European countries (FRA, 2014).⁸⁰ The beneficial character of early educational intervention is evidenced in the literature. For instance, US studies show that early childhood education has a positive impact on the later achievement and academic success of children in poverty (Barnett, 1998). Moreover, Campbell and Ramey (1995) found that early childhood educational interventions (an emphasis on pre-school treatment for poor African American students) resulted in long-term intellectual and academic benefits for these students. Finally, Ou and Reynolds (2006), drawing on the Chicago Longitudinal Study, argued that pre-school education was connected with students' longer stay in education, a higher rate of high school completion and a higher rate of college attendance. Thus, early interventions were advocated in relation to the education of Roma.

Second, some participants, such as Alcmene and Hippocrates, felt there was a need to intervene when Roma students complete primary school and enter lower high school as they considered this period to be a critical moment because high rates of dropout are frequently reported at this point, according to their accounts. The transmission from primary school to lower higher school is critical particularly for girls. According to Dragonas (2012), patriarchal practices and gendered concerns (such as early marriages, taking care of younger siblings and feelings of being at risk of abuse at school) appear to keep some Roma girls out of school at

⁷⁹ Law 3518/2006, JO A272, article 73 (21.12.2006). Θέματα Πρωτοβάθμιας και Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης [Regulations of primary and secondary education].

⁸⁰ The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

this point; more specifically, it is estimated that “overall only 10% of Roma girls finish primary school” (Dragonas, 2012, p. 15).

Third, Antigone and Alcmene called for long-term interventions and Ismene emphasised the need for interventions throughout Roma pupils’ educational lives. Pericles referred to the need for supportive educational measures for Roma from nursery school until university. He explained, based on his experience, that Roma university students need support as there is still the danger of dropping out. Moreover, they might need extra support with their courses; for instance, he said he would find it helpful to attend English courses at university, if there were any, because he did not have the chance to learn any foreign languages as a child. Based on these suggestions, the timing of any interventions appears of importance in any policy discussion addressing Roma’s education. Moreover, gender issues should also be considered.

8.4.1.2. Need for Financial Support: Athena, Pylades, Demosthenes and Pericles noted that many Roma families need some financial support in order to send their children to school. Although public education is free in Greece (there are no tuition fees at school nor for undergraduate studies and many postgraduate courses), there are some expenses that a family needs to cover (like bags, pens etc.) that many Roma families cannot afford. Thus, Demosthenes said the local municipalities or organisations should cover these expenses and take care of those Roma who do not have clothes and shoes. Athena suggested that the state should give a monthly allowance to Roma families in order to cover their children’s school expenses. She clarified that the state needs to help all the poor families through these measures and not only the Roma.⁸¹

Pylades and Pericles raised the need to offer financial support to those Roma students who study even after their entrance to university. On the basis of his experience, Pericles confessed that sometimes he cannot visit his parents during the holidays because he cannot pay for the

⁸¹ Currently, the Greek state gives an annual allowance (of 300€) to poor families (those with an annual income lower than 3,000€) who send their children to school (compulsory education). For more, see Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.1. & Footnote 32).

bus ticket to travel home. He also noted that it had been very helpful for him to access free university accommodation during his studies. His story illustrates that the free character of undergraduate studies in Greece (no fees, provision of free food and accommodation for some students on the basis of socio-economic criteria⁸²) makes attendance at higher education feasible for Roma students coming from poorer families. Pylades, who lives at his family home, in the same city as his tertiary institution, makes the most of the university facilities – such as eating without charge at the student restaurant and studying in the university library. Pericles' and Pylades' stories highlight the importance of the free services provided in Greek higher education. According to these participants, it is important for Roma students to access free university services such as catering and accommodation but they do not (or at least not explicitly) ask for Roma to be prioritised in order to access them.

In the light of these comments, I would argue that the reasoning underpinning my participants' suggestions is informed mainly by a poverty-related discourse. My participants emphasise the economic injustices which many poor Roma suffer. However, they recommend benefits related to the redistribution of resources focusing on measures for poor Greek students – many poor Roma included - rather than benefits targeted at the Roma as a distinct group. The principle for making decisions about resource distribution that is being discussed here is based on financial need rather than ethnicity/culture.

8.4.1.3. Holistic Interventions: My participants' frequent reference to the need to consider socio-economic factors in any attempt to support the

⁸² There are specific guidelines for students who apply for these services. For instance, an undergraduate student coming from a family with annual income lower than 45,000€ is eligible for free catering. For more, see Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. Ministerial Decision (Αρ. Πρωτ.: Φ5/68535/Β3, 18.06.2012), ΑΔΑ: Β4ΛΜ9-Ν1Γ. Καθορισμός όρων, προϋποθέσεων και διαδικασίας για την παροχή δωρεάν σίτισης στους φοιτητές των ΑΕΙ [Terms and Conditions for the provision of free meals to university students].

education of Roma was evident when some participants talked of the need for holistic approaches when addressing the problems that Roma confront. Some participants (Theaetetus, Nestor, Ifigeneia, Alcmene and Miltiades) said that the interventions required to support the Roma relate to many areas and not just education. Theaetetus said that multiple agents need to work together to address Roma's problems and, not surprisingly, he included the Greek Orthodox Church in these agents. According to Alcmene, holistic interventions might be more useful for the Roma, who frequently have interrelated and overlapping needs. Ifigeneia considers education one of the axes related to the improvement of Roma's lives. She thinks that "We need a gradual change" (*Ifigeneia*, 142) and that employment comes first for the change of the current situation for the Roma. Nestor explained (*Nestor*, 96):

What I have seen is that when the Gypsy families ... have a permanent residence and they have a job – permanent if possible - then they think about their child, they think of sending their child to school ... So, when we have in mind these (Gypsy) people who are suffering, who are socially marginalised, when we have in mind that they should attend school, we should concurrently think how we will resolve their problems.

According to Nestor, education should not be seen separately but in relation to other domains, such as housing and occupation. Nestor's argument resonates with the work of Hatzinikolaou and Mitakidou (2005) who argue that a lack of adequate housing often results in school dropout and failure and also the eventual social exclusion of many Roma children (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). In particular, he noted (*Nestor*, 97):

When (the Gypsies) live under miserable conditions, what can the teachers do? ... They might be indifferent, so this is bad. However, even if the teachers are interested and try to resolve (these problems), how much can they do? ... Can the teachers face these problems alone? No, they cannot. So, there is a need for a holistic policy to face these issues: financial, residential, professional and among these issues there are educational issues as well. We cannot see (education) separately.

At this point, it is worth noting that integrated attempts are advocated at a European level to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing (EC,

2014).⁸³ However, in practice, more systematic targeted measures need to be taken in Greece in relation to these four areas.⁸⁴

8.4.1.4. Need for Locally - oriented Interventions: In Chapter 6 (Section 6.5.), the influences of locality on educational success were reported (e.g. the importance that living in urban areas or in non-Roma areas or in more tolerant locales had for some participants' educational progression). Hippocrates, Demosthenes and Antigone explicitly referred to the impact that local factors can have on any future interventions in the following ways. Demosthenes saw the role of the local municipality as central in any interventions for the Roma, such as in cases where Roma need vaccinations and extra support with school expenses (school materials) or even when they are in need of clothing and shoes. Taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the Roma (differences among the Roma from region to region), Antigone said that every intervention should be centrally planned (e.g. by the government/relevant ministries), taking into account local factors. Hippocrates argued that interventions should be differentiated on the basis of the features of each area. For example, according to Hippocrates, although the Roma in his area (Agia Varvara) live in relatively good conditions, few Roma continue into higher levels of education. In addition, although Hippocrates is opposed to the establishment of separate Roma schools, he understands that separate schooling might be a feasible short-term solution in some locales

⁸³ When I cite (EC, 2014), I refer to the European Commission's Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (2014).

⁸⁴ In particular, the assessment of Greece regarding the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (EC, 2014, p. 27) calls for: a) Systematic measures in education to reinforce inclusion in compulsory education, starting with ensuring access to quality-inclusive early childhood education and care, as well as pre-school education, proper monitoring of enrolment and attendance and the reinforcement of desegregation measures; b) Targeted measures in employment with increased focus on effective integration into the open labour market, a consideration of the promotion of Roma entrepreneurship under the Youth Guarantee and adequate and sustainable funding to secure the proper operation of 29 Support Centres for vulnerable groups, including Roma; c) More systematic measures to improving access of Roma to healthcare and reinforce training of healthcare professionals; d) Adequate and sustainable funding to support the implementation of well-designed regional housing programmes and the consideration of the mapping of socio-economic and living conditions in Roma settlements.

because of the special characteristics of some areas (e.g. the high levels of poverty of some Roma groups, or hostility towards Roma).

8.4.1.5. Involving Parents: Patroclus, Hippocrates, Pylades, Theaetetus, Alcmene, Ismene and Laertes emphasised the need to include parents in any interventions addressing the education of Roma. These participants' views highlight the positive difference that parental engagement in schooling makes to students' achievement as reported in the literature (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.4.4), Theaetetus underlined the critical role that Roma mothers play in the Roma community. In particular, he noted that educational interventions should address Roma women because even if these Roma women do not study themselves, they will transfer their aspirations to their children/the next generation. Theaetetus' argument about the maternal impact on children's educational progression is well documented in relevant literature (Vincent, 2012). According to Alcmene, any interventions should address Roma parents because parents are the starting point in "achieving an encouraging atmosphere at home" (*Alcmene*, 515). Ismene referred to the need for Roma parents to participate in Parents' School Associations and familiarise themselves with the way that school works. She said that a closer relationship between Roma parents and teachers is needed.⁸⁵ She added (*Ismene*, 234):

⁸⁵ In Greece, parents can get involved in school life through participating in Parents' Associations (as described in a) the Law 1566/1985, JO A167 (30.09.1985), article 53, paragraph 3, b) the Law 2621/1998, JO 136 (23.06.1998), article 2 and c) the 'Coding of the operation of Parents' Associations' (Edu.klimaka.gr, 2015). In practice, most parents get involved in their children's education through offering them academic help with their homework and attending school celebrations while few parents take part in Parents' Associations (cited in Papadopoulou, 2014). Recently, many official documents from the Ministry of Education have referred to the family's involvement in their children's education. For instance, parents are encouraged to get engaged in their children's learning even from the nursery school. In the *Teacher's Guide to the Nursery Curriculum* (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, 2011), there are specific sections about the importance of the cooperation between family and school. The Minister of Education talked of future changes designed for primary education in Greece (Proposal of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs regarding changes in Primary Education, Press Release, 28-11-14). In this proposal, he emphasised that the Greek school should

The Roma parents should feel accepted at school ... They should also realise they are necessary even in school celebrations...

Ismene's words indicate that Roma parents' role in school life is generally limited - if non-existent. Crozier and Davies' (2007) study on parental engagement in schooling in the UK - with an emphasis on parents of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage - shows that many parents from ethnic groups are often seen as less interested in education by schools and as 'hard to reach'; however, in practice it is often the way that schools are organised which does not facilitate these parents' involvement in school activities. Taking the above into account, it seems reasonable to conclude that Roma parents' involvement in school life needs to be directly addressed and enhanced by teachers, schools and relevant policies and interventions, as this could be a step towards enhancing children's educational progression.

Laertes emphasised that Roma parents are responsible for their children's educational progression. He was in favour of stricter sanctions – or at least the full implementation of the existing measures - regarding Roma parents when their children drop out of school. In what follows, I detail Laertes' arguments because his arguments illustrate the negative attitudes that society and state frequently hold about the Roma.

'Dilemma': Parental attitudes and their Roma children dropouts: Here, I use the concept 'silent tolerance' to refer to what Laertes described in relation to the enrolment and attendance of Roma at school. Although Laertes was the only participant who referred to this phenomenon, I found his idea of the state's/society's silent tolerance worth unpacking as it reveals the conflict between theory and practice in relation to the state's interest in Roma issues.

be 'open to the society' where many agents, such as the local municipality and the Parents' Associations will cooperate.

Research has documented the difficulties that Roma students still face in Greek schools, such as the high numbers of students' dropping out and lower attainment levels compared with their non-Roma peers (Nikolaou, 2009). According to Greek law,⁸⁶ when students do not attend compulsory education, their parents/guardians get fined. However, it seems that this law is not enacted in the case of Roma. According to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006, cited in Themelis, 2009c), low attendance and high absenteeism rates could indicate, on the one hand, that Roma pupils and parents are not convinced of the importance of education and, on the other, that schools tend to have a more permissive attitude towards their absence. According to Laertes, the non-sanctioning of Roma parents for not sending their children to compulsory education reveals the lack of real interest by the state in the education of Roma and in Roma in general. Laertes said (*Laertes*, 491, 492, 494):

Frequently the teachers or the Head teacher who must register (Roma) students at a school do not want these students ... And there are cases where the Head says 'You will go to another school to get registered' ... This is a crime in terms of law (illegal) but mostly in moral terms ... The heads ask for so many documents when the Roma children want to get registered at a school (in order to avoid accepting them).

At this point, it is worth referring to a document which was cited by the educational site esos (2012) as showing the continuance of active exclusionary practices against the Roma. As noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.), according to this document, at the beginning of the school year 2012-2013, the Greek Ministry of Education asked the Directors of Primary Education (of each county) to report those head teachers who did not register Roma students at their primary schools. This policy supports Laertes' claim that exclusionary practices against the Roma do take place.

⁸⁶ According to Greek Law 1566/1985 (article 2, paragraph 3) a parent/guardian who does not take care of their child's registration at school and/or their school attendance, gets sanctioned (fined) according to article 458 of the criminal code.

Laertes did not just express disappointment with the non implementation of the law when Roma parents do not send their children to school. He also suggested the need for stricter measures as a sanction for those Roma parents who do not send their children to compulsory education (e.g. cutting their benefits). On the basis of his own story (Laertes left school in the first year of lower high school; he returned to school as a mature student), he said (*Laertes*, 542 - 544):

It would have been good if someone (from the state services) had told my father ... 'What are you doing? Are you stopping your child's schooling? If you do so, you will lose the right to do this and that ...'. I might sound too strict ... The advocate should say to the Roma parents 'As long as your child does not attend school, you will not have access to the benefits you take up to now'.

Although Laertes was the only participant who talked openly of what he saw as the state's indifference towards the Roma, other participants also complained that it is only during the election period that the state shows an interest and takes action regarding the problems of Roma in order to attract their votes.⁸⁷

8.4.1.6. For and Against Separate Schooling: As far as educational provision is concerned, Roma children usually attend mainstream schools. They often receive extra support through attending reception and tutorial classes (for more see Appendix 2). The official policy discourse in Greece presents the mainstream school as the predominant school type for Roma students in Greek education. In the existing Circulars, such as the Ministerial Circular (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs) Γ1/694/1.9.99 entitled 'Φοίτηση Τσιγγανοπαίδων' [Roma children's school attendance], a separate school for Roma children is not regarded as desirable and is provided only in specific cases where there is no other solution (usually because of the distance of

⁸⁷ A similar argument was made by both Ifigeneia and Ismene who, based on their personal experiences, said that their political parties had included them as candidates in order to attract Roma votes. Ifigeneia claimed that at the beginning of her career she had "definitely been 'used' in order to attract Roma votes" (*Ifigeneia*, 105, 106).

a Roma camp from the nearest mainstream school). Despite the lack of official data⁸⁸ regarding the separate schooling of Roma, it seems that Roma students often experience various forms of discrimination in educational provision, such as being educated in separate schools in Roma areas where only Roma students are registered or by being placed in separate classes inside the mainstream school (Dragonas, 2012). As a result, it has been argued that the education provided to Roma pupils is often of lower quality (ibid).

During the interviews with my participants, several arguments related to Roma's separate schooling were raised. Their suggestions, as reported below, seem contradictory. They appear to ask for a fair system (treating Roma the same as other Greeks) while simultaneously they argue for cultural awareness and sensitivity (respect for difference, such as in relation to their maternal language). In relation to separate schooling, generally, my participants do not support it, but they can see it as a short-term solution in some cases. They also raise questions regarding policy issues. For example, why do separate Roma schools exist *de facto* (and not *de jure*)? What would be an alternative to separate schooling (e.g. policies of dispersal)? In what follows, I examine some of my participants' views regarding separate schooling.

Theaetetus was positive about the need for separate schooling. In particular, he regarded separate schools inside the Roma camps as beneficial for the Roma children, as a short-term solution, to promote the value of education inside the Roma community. Paris also saw a need for separate educational material for students whose maternal language is different from the mainstream school language. As explained in Chapter 2

⁸⁸ As far as the lack of available statistics regarding Roma students in Greece are concerned, I would suggest that this fact does not only reflect the fact that some Roma are not registered on the municipality rolls; it also indicates an issue which is of concern in social justice theory and relates to tensions between different forms of justice (economic and cultural). From the perspective of economic justice, the monitoring of Roma can have "a vital role to play in providing the information needed to combat discrimination" (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002, p. 503) (such as data for their under-representation in universities). However, from a cultural justice perspective, the monitoring of Roma could operate "as a normalising, racialising and essentialising form of classification" (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2002, p. 503). For more, see Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.4.).

(Section 2.5.4.), at an international level, some scholars (e.g. Hancock, 1998) consider separate schooling beneficial for Roma students.

However, most of my participants expressed their opposition to Roma receiving separate education or their using different materials. For instance, Iphicles is opposed to every intervention which differentiates Roma students from non-Roma ones, such as separate schooling or the use of separate material. Ismene is also against any educational attempts which separate Roma students because these attempts result in Roma being treated as a 'ghetto group', according to her. She also supported policies of dispersal where few Roma students attend the same classroom or even the same school, claiming that this type of allocation would prevent Roma from being treated as a separate group. However, I need to note that policies of dispersal, often known as bussing policies, which, for example, enabled the dispersal of immigrant students in Britain in the 1970s, have been contentious and have not been widely practiced (Killian, 1979). Farkas (2014) refers to the perspective of bussing programmes which could help Roma students attend mainstream schools outside the settlements which they would need transportation to access.

Separate schooling was disapproved of by many of my participants. For instance, Theagenes considered separate schooling a discriminatory practice. Although Antigone did not support separate schooling, she recognised that sometimes this could be the only chance Roma students may have for becoming literate in locales where Roma students are not welcome in mainstream schools. Similarly, Hippocrates thinks that separate schooling might be the only solution in some areas. However, he expressed his fear that separate schools can become ghetto schools. Demosthenes is not in favour of Roma schools and sees them as discriminatory. However, he recognises that in these schools, Roma students do become literate. He also notes that, sometimes, even when Roma students attend mainstream schools, they do not feel welcome and, in practice, they get marginalised – a form of 'ghettoisation' in the mainstream school. Demosthenes' argument is that the focus should be on the quality of the education offered to Roma students in practice.

Alcmene disapproved of the idea of separate schools for Roma children. She sees this kind of segregation as a racist practice against the Roma. Jason recognised the absence of data regarding the establishment of Roma schools; however, he reported that such schools exist even when they officially appear to be intercultural schools or even mainstream local schools. According to Jason, the establishment and maintenance of separate Roma schools reveals the racism of local communities against the Roma who live in these areas. He said (*Jason*, 169):

The Greek state would say (we establish these schools) because we need to ... These Roma children might not be able to reach the nearest school ... The truth is (that these schools get established) because of (the Greeks') racism (against the Roma) ... It is mainly a local issue. There are some mayors who are opposed to Roma's attendance at the mainstream school that non-Roma children attend.

Nestor also highlighted racism against the Roma as the real reason for the establishment of separate Roma schools. Although Nestor is opposed to separate schools for Roma, he could accept them as a short-term solution when there are no alternatives (*Nestor*, 98):

I would say that I consider them (as accepted) only for a small period of time and only when they are necessary. I am not for this solution and nobody is - even abroad ... Gypsy parents, even when they are illiterate, ... they want their children to be with the other (non-Roma) children; this is explicit, clear, it is stated by them as well. (Separate schooling) is not the (correct) model ... But because of the fact that some (non Gypsy) parents say 'We do not want our children to be with the gypsy children' and so on, this results in this solution (separate schooling). However, this can be a solution (of necessity) only for a small period of time. This is not the right school.

8.4.1.7. Positive Examples and Future Educational Success: As explained in Chapter 7, positive exemplars of other successful Roma boosted some of my participants' progression. In some cases, participants reported that they serve as positive exemplars themselves in their areas, as detailed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3.2.). For instance, Ismene reported that some Roma in their area use her as an exemplar for

their children's progression. Indeed, some participants such as Theagenes, Pylades, Miltiades, Paris and Jason believe in the positive impact of Roma role models on the educational progression of younger Roma. In particular, Paris believes that seeing the success of other Roma can have a positive impact on the educational progression of Roma children. According to Jason, Roma role models can inspire and motivate Roma children to progress in education. Finally, positive exemplars of educated Roma might be very helpful for younger Roma students, according to Miltiades. Laertes gave examples of famous successful Roma (in many fields, in Greece and other countries) that could be presented to younger Roma in order to inspire them and make them believe in themselves.

Based on her experience at summer camp activities, Antigone highlighted the significant role that Roma mediators played in this programme's positive results. Thus, she supports the active involvement of (educated) Roma adults in any interventions addressing Roma children. Moreover, she thinks that it would be helpful for Roma students to be taught by Roma teachers - if there are any. As far as educated Roma are concerned, Antigone understands that there are some educated Roma who hide their Roma origin. As in her case, these Roma people might hide their Roma identity because of the existing negative stereotypes against the Roma. As Antigone noted (*Antigone*, 177), "You do not simply feel different but you feel you are something terribly inferior". Antigone believes that those few Roma in higher education should be invited to get involved in Roma programmes as their participation would potentially be beneficial for the Roma community. However, according to her, some Roma do not want to reveal their Roma background. Therefore, they would be less likely to get involved in Roma's education for fear of experiencing discrimination themselves.

Some positive impact of role modeling is reported in the literature - often by arguments that "like is good for like" (as noted by Carrington et al., 2008, p. 315, although this is not a position they themselves support): for example, it is argued that minority teachers are needed when teaching

minority students because black teachers are role models for black children (Irvine, 1989); or that male teachers bring out the best in boys and female teachers the best in girls (Carrington et al., 2008). Similarly, the involvement of educationally successful Roma in educational interventions – as suggested by some participants above - can be of value. However, it is important to highlight the limitations of the impact role modeling can have on educational success.

The positive impact of black male teachers on black male students was reported in Byfield's (2008) study, where some of her participants noted that, in many cases, their feelings of pride and their positive sense of identity were enhanced by their black male teachers. However, in some cases, teachers (who had not been black mates themselves) played a significant part in her participants' progress (e.g. through effective engagement, motivation, emotional sponsorship, equal treatment and high expectations) (ibid). These cases show that all teachers – regardless of their own ethnicity/minority background - may serve as mentors and culturally responsive instructors.

The positive impact of black teachers for black students was also recognised in Irvine's (1989) study. However, Irvine (1989) argues that in the case of black students, seeing black teachers as role models only may limit teachers' potential to go beyond role modeling and become mentors and culturally responsive instructors. Moreover, the limitations of role modeling on students' progression were shown in Carrington et al.'s (2008) study. Drawing on their study with 11 year-olds in England, they found that matching teachers and students by gender did not make any difference to students' attainment or their attitudes towards school (Carrington et al., 2008).

In the case of my participants, I need to clarify that Roma teachers or educationally successful Roma in general will not necessarily be seen as role models for younger Roma. And even if/when this is the case, role modeling will not necessarily influence Roma pupils in terms of educational progression. Ifigeneia and Theaetetus explicitly doubted

whether successful Roma individuals have a strong positive impact on younger Roma. Ifigeneia talked of some Roma who get involved in educational programmes for Roma just in order to earn money. Thus, these successful Roma may not necessarily help the educational progression of Roma pupils. Theaetetus also argued that educated Roma may have a limited impact on the education/educational progression of Roma because, based on his experiences, he believes that many Roma do not care much about education (*Theaetetus*, 199, 200):

Even in my case, when I say that I am a Roma priest, Roma children are not interested in my educational pathway ... They just keep in mind that I might be able to offer them material things ... And this is how it works for them ... They grow up finding out that the others (can) provide materials ... They do not seek intellectual goods...

What seems significant for those involved in the education of Roma and in educational interventions for the Roma is not to be Roma (alone) but to be culturally responsive and aware of Roma issues, to be/become an advocate and mentor for Roma students.

However, as far as educated Roma's participation in Roma's educational interventions is concerned, Laertes emphasised the need for educated Roma not only to take part in educational interventions for Roma but also to play a key role in the planning and the implementation of these interventions. As detailed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3.3.2), Laertes noted that his participation in Roma educational programmes was limited to serving as a mediator (between the Roma and the non-Roma). He emphasised the need for educationally successful Roma to have more significant tasks/responsibilities in setting up educational interventions addressing the Roma through "being at the forefront" (*Laertes*, 354). His argument raises issues related to 'associational justice' (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002) and more specifically the need for more inclusive intervention in planning and design processes that enable those who the interventions are designed to benefit to take part in making decisions about the nature and content of those interventions.

8.4.1.8. Positive Discrimination for Entrance to Higher Education: In the Greek educational system, there are some special mechanisms to support students entering higher education through different pathways rather than the mainstream nationwide exams, as explained in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.). As far as Roma entrance to higher education is concerned, some participants expressed contradictory views on special measures to promote Roma access to higher education. In what follows, I present five participants' views which illuminate the complex debate about positive discrimination measures in relation to higher education access.

Jason's narrative illustrates the need for special measures regarding Roma access to higher education (*Jason*, 215):

Arguments which support that special measures for Roma's entrance to higher education result in Roma's further discrimination do not make sense; Roma should be the only people who can talk about discrimination as they have been discriminated against and they have been treated in an unfair way.

Laertes is also supportive of positive discrimination measures regarding the Roma. He supported the idea of Roma accessing university through a special category of candidates (where specific places will be given to Roma students or extra points will be provided after the nationwide exams). According to Laertes, the Greek state should support Roma's education through measures such as offering jobs to those Roma who get educated (e.g. complete high school).

In contrast, Ifigeneia and Ismene expressed their opposition to positive discrimination measures regarding Roma access to higher education. According to Ifigeneia, such measures promote a minority status for the Roma. More importantly, though, she thinks that "it is fair and ethical for all the Greek citizens to meet the same criteria in order to enter University" (*Ifigeneia*, 122). She also argued that, through other positive discrimination measures, the Roma get used to living on the benefits they get from the state (*Ifigeneia*, 127): "When you make things easier for some people in life, then the results will not be the expected ones". Ismene does not support the idea of having a special category for Roma university candidates. She seemed very reluctant to accept such

measures, as these appear to help the Roma but they separate them at the same time (*Ismene*, 241, 242):

Why should we have a special category for Roma candidates? ... Why are they a separate group? Just because of their complexion? ... I do not understand this rationale and I do not accept it ... We make them a 'separate group' this way ... As a Roma, I would feel that the state helps me but also marginalises me/makes me different ... If the state wants to help the Roma, this should happen from the beginning of their schooling in a correct way ... First, you put me in a prefabricated building at primary school and then we discuss (about positive discrimination) (?)...

Ismene's words echo Mavroyiorgos' (2014) argument that Roma's dependence on separate measures of social support exposes them to practices of further discrimination and exclusion against them. Ismene disapproves of affirmative action and calls for alternatives "aimed at transformation" (Power & Gewirtz, 2001). She emphasised the need for redistribution as the first step of supporting Roma's education from pre-school education.

Pericles is in favour of positive discrimination measures because of the practical positive results he believes that these policies could have on the education of Roma (*Pericles*, 207, 209, 210):

Ideally, I would like the Roma students to have equal opportunities from the beginning of their schooling and be able to enter university without any special measures when they complete high school - the same way their non-Roma classmates do. However, in practice, there is a need for establishing positive discrimination measures in order to achieve good results in regard to the education of Roma ... There is a single way to reverse injustice: establish positive discrimination for some years in order to achieve Roma access to higher education.

The above arguments could inform policy discussions related to the promotion of the future educational success of Roma through positive discrimination measures - such as those that support Roma access to higher education. However, it is important to note the complexities and difficulties involved in introducing such measures: the Roma in Greece do not officially represent a separate group and relevant data are not always available. In social justice terms, according to my participants, 'equality of opportunity' is provided to the Roma students in most cases as they have

equal rights, access and participation to every educational provision offered to all students in the Greek educational system. An important exception relates to the establishment of (de facto) Roma schools. However, the concept of 'equality of outcome' (for more, see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.) does not apply to my participants' suggestions as in many cases, as Ismene's and Ifigeneia's arguments show, some Roma do not seem to want to ensure equal rates of success (compared to the non-Roma Greeks) on the basis of affirmative action programmes which describe the Roma as a separate category. What most participants describe as what they want in relation to the educational success of Roma could be better understood in terms of Lynch's 'equality of condition objective' which (cited in Gewirtz, 1998, p. 472):

would involve the development of an egalitarian society which would be committed to equality in the living conditions of all members of society (both citizens and non-citizens) taking due account of their heterogeneity be it arising from gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or any other attribute. It would not simply be concerned with equalising the position (access, participation and outcome) of marginalised groups at each level within the hierarchies of wealth, power and privilege.

8.4.1.9. Romani Language and Roma's Future Educational Success

I do remember that at primary school I could not read (Greek texts) as fast as my Greek (non-Roma) classmates did ... I had to work a lot in order to be able to read fast ... You can get confused because of the two languages ... We should do something about it...

(Electra, 185)

The above extract from Electra's interview illustrates the difficulties that some Roma students confront at Greek school because their mother tongue is different than the mainstream school language. Roma's community language is Romani. The fact that the community language spoken by the Roma is different than the language used in school (Greek) is considered to be a barrier to their educational progression (Vergidis, 1998; Chatzissavidis, 2007). Indeed, Kostouli and Mitakidou

(2009) argue that many Roma children enter school with a poor command of Greek, as they speak Romani at home. Ismene reported the difference between Roma's mother tongue and the school language as a difficulty that many Roma students still face at school. Iphicles also reported Roma students' bilingualism as a factor which can complicate their educational progression. Electra noted that the Greek state needs to provide extra help for Roma students in order to address language issues that may hold their educational progress back.

In Greece, educational provision is offered to those students who possess a limited acquaintance with the Greek language (the official documents do not name specific student groups). In particular, since 2010,⁸⁹ educational priority zones (Ζώνες Εκπαιδευτικής Προτεραιότητας)⁹⁰ have been identified in Greece aiming at offering academic support to those students who do not speak Greek well. This programme includes Reception Classes (Τάξεις Υποδοχής) and Supportive Tutorial classes (Ενισχυτικά Φροντιστηριακά Τμήματα) (For more details, see Appendix 2).

However, the fact that there is educational provision addressing students with difficulties in Greek does not mean that these interventions are necessarily successful or that the students who attend them become fluent in Greek. During the interviews with my participants, I realised that, although they have entered higher education (and it makes sense to expect that they speak Greek fluently or even in an advanced way), in some cases, some of them were making mistakes in terms of grammar,

⁸⁹ Law 3879/2010, JO A163 (21.09.2010), Articles 26 §1α and §1β. Ανάπτυξη της Διά Βίου Μάθησης και λοιπές διατάξεις [Development of Lifelong Learning and other directives]. According to this law, indicators such as high dropout rates, low rates of entrance to higher education as well as socio-economic factors such as poverty were taken into account in order to establish the educational priority zones.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. Document 'Βασικές κατευθύνσεις και οδηγίες για την ίδρυση και λειτουργία Τάξεων Υποδοχής (Τ.Υ.) Ι και ΙΙ Ζ.Ε.Π. και Ενισχυτικών Φροντιστηριακών Τμημάτων (Ε.Φ.Τ.) Ζ.Ε.Π. για σχολικό έτος 2012-2013 (Αρ.Πρωτ.164871/Γ1/01-11-2013/ΥΠΑΙΘ, ΑΔΑ: Β4ΤΖ9-Θ0Σ)' [Guidelines for the establishment and operation of the educational priority zones Reception Classes I and II and Supportive Tutorial Classes for the school year 2012-2013 (No. 164871/Γ1/01-11-2013/ΥΠΑΙΘ, ΑΔΑ: Β4ΤΖ9-Θ0Σ)].

vocabulary (or using non-advanced vocabulary) or syntax. Although Harris' and Leung's (2011) study refers to the use of English as an additional language for students coming from ethnic and linguistic minority families in the UK context, their argument could also apply to the case of Greek Roma. Harris and Leung (2011) write that, even when students coming from ethnic and linguistic minority families:

begin their school careers in England with very limited English language proficiency, their entry to English tends to be connected with a local urban spoken vernacular English, learned informally, rather than with the spoken or written standard English associated with the formal aspects of the school curriculum (Harris & Leung, 2011, p. 259).

Based on the above, it could be argued that some Roma students' Greek is not advanced compared to the level of Greek used in the school context. The difficulties some Roma may confront in Greek could potentially hamper these students' educational progress. As argued by Harris and Leung (2011), in the UK, the use of English as an additional language has been a "cross-curricular teaching concern" (p. 253). In the case of my participants, none of them reported difficulties in educational progression because of a limited understanding of the language used (e.g. difficulties in Maths because of limited understanding of the words used in mathematical problems). However, Pericles raised an issue regarding teachers' attitudes and practices (e.g. giving lower grades) because of Roma students not being fluent in Greek. As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.1.), Pericles referred to an event where his Ancient Greek teacher gave him a low grade in the term despite his having done well in the classroom (e.g. participation, homework) and having scored high in the tests. When Pericles complained because of the inconsistency between his continuous attempts and doing well in the classroom with the final grade given, the teacher replied that this happened because of the (low) level of his competence in Greek.

However, not all of my participants speak Romani. For instance, Theagenes and Demosthenes come from a Roma clan where Romani is not used at all. Paris said he does not speak Romani but his mother

does. Many participants claimed that during their childhood, they spoke both Romani and Greek at home. Some participants, who do not socialise with many Roma anymore, said that they have almost forgotten how to speak their community language and thus, they can only understand it.

However, both Hippocrates and Alcmene considered the Romani language an important element of Roma culture and want to preserve it. Hippocrates passed the Romani language to his children. Alcmene does the same with her 3 year old son. In particular, she said that her son already speaks two languages (*Alcmene*, 59):⁹¹

I want (my son) to learn Romani ... However, many Roma mothers recently try to use Greek only ... I do not agree with their approach because every language is a treasure, isn't it? ... It is better for him to learn Romani now that he is so young ... He already speaks two languages...

Alcmene argued that the use and cultivation of the Romani language should also be encouraged at school – mainly during complementary school activities and educational interventions for the Roma students. In this context, Roma students can use their community language in order to express themselves (e.g. write a fairy-tale). There is no special provision for the Romani language in the Greek context – in contrast with other home languages (for more see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.). As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.2.), the benefits of using the students' mother tongue in language teaching and learning is emphasised in the international literature (Cummins, 2008). Paleologou (2004) argues for educational programmes that support mother tongue learning and the development of corresponding instructional material. Language issues regarding not only the enhancement of the Greek language (e.g. additional hours for teaching Greek, or separate teaching in reception and tutorial classes) but also the use of the maternal

⁹¹ Alcmene treats Romani as a 'proper' language. However, the status of this language in Greece could be challenged. As explained in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.2.), the Romani language as well as Roma's home culture are often considered to hamper Roma's schooling in Greece (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009).

language of the Roma in the school settings need to be considered in relation to raising the attainment of Roma children in Greece.

8.4.1.10. Practical Help with Homework: It is widely recognised that, in most cases, Roma students cannot receive help with their homework from their parents at home because many Roma are often not educated and may not be literate. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.), according to a recent study led by Spain's Fundacion Secretariado Gitano in 2009, 83% of Greek Roma have no formal education at all (cited in Kostadinova, 2011). Alcmene, Jason, Theaetetus and Ismene focused on the need to support Roma students in terms of offering them help with their homework. According to Alcmene, in her locale, Roma parents' illiteracy and their inability to support their children at school is a basic barrier to Roma students' educational progression. Alcmene helps Roma students in the courses offered by the Female Roma Association in her area in the evenings and the weekends. This association aims at offering support and help to Roma students with their homework but also with teaching Roma students how to read and write.

The usefulness of extra lessons for the educational progress of Roma students was recognised by many participants. Jason thinks that extra lessons can be helpful for Roma students from an early age (primary school) and should continue to be offered especially when Roma children start lower high school. Jason recognised the usefulness of the supportive tutorial classes for Roma students already run through the Roma programmes. Theaetetus wanted to help Roma students through his priesthood by trying to organise some free evening lessons where volunteers would help with the Roma children's homework. However, as explained in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3.2.), the implementation of such lessons is the responsibility of the municipality and thus, Theaetetus could not get involved.

In some cases, participants highlight the role that educational interventions for the entire population can have in supporting the educational progression of Roma students. For instance, Ismene

emphasised the positive role of the all-day school⁹² in providing help in relation to the students' homework. Another example relates to the free state supportive tutorials (enishytikh didaskalia/ενισχυτική διδασκαλία) offered to students who attend high school.⁹³ Ismene and Alcmene recognised the contribution of these state services to their own educational progression. In many cases, participants supported educational interventions for the whole population rather than the provision of additional targeted support for the Roma as a separate group.

8.4.1.11. Educational Programmes, Teaching Materials and School Curriculum:

Many participants were opposed to practices which distinguish Roma students from the other non-Roma students, such as the use of separate teaching materials. However, they were positive about additional educational interventions addressing Roma students – who, in the main, attend mainstream schools.

First, some participants referred to programmes that are organised centrally by the Ministry of Education and Greek universities and address Roma education. Problems related to Roma children's non-attendance and early drop-out in Greece are reflected in the development of the programme «Εκπαίδευση των παιδιών Ρομά» [“Education of Roma children”] (for more see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3.). Its primary aim is to boost Roma's attendance at pre-school and compulsory education. Most

⁹² The all-day school addresses all the students attending the Greek school. The Document of the Ministry of Education regarding the all-day schools for the school year 2014-2015 entitled ‘Λειτουργία των Ολοήμερων Δημοτικών Σχολείων για το σχολικό έτος 2014-2015 (Αρ.Πρωτ.Φ.50/226/143572/Γ1/10-09-2014/ΥΠΑΙΘ’ [Operation of the all-day primary schools for the school year 2014-2015 (No. Φ.50/226/143572/Γ1/10-09-2014/ΥΠΑΙΘ)] includes the following in the all-day school aims: the disruption of social inequalities and offering practical support for students (especially those coming from underprivileged backgrounds). Moreover, according to the same document, the all-day school aims at providing tutorials/additional teaching time, improving educational results and fighting against school failure and dropout. The timetable includes time for the students' homework.

⁹³ My Roma participants referred to the beneficial character of some compensatory educational interventions which offer academic help to students in Greece and address the whole student population. For more information about these supportive educational programmes, see Appendix 2.

participants believe these educational interventions to be useful and helpful for the Roma students. Some participants are or have been actively involved in interventions for Roma children themselves. Alcmene, Jason, Paris, Antigone, Laertes work as mediators in the aforementioned university programmes; Ismene had been involved in the past in an NGO which focuses on the education of Roma; Pericles recently completed his internship where he worked with Muslim Roma students; and Nestor has been involved in Roma projects in the past.

Second, some participants referred to other types of activities which they claimed can prove beneficial for the educational success of Roma students. For instance, Hector who had received support from a non-governmental organisation through his school years emphasised the significance of out of school activities (such as theatre and music) in his progression – in addition to the practical help with homework. Antigone, based on her summer camp experience (this was a summer camp organised by an NGO, co-funded by the Ministry of Education), claimed that additional education-related interventions can encourage pro-school attitudes. According to Antigone, such interventions promoting Roma children's participation in (creative) activities do not only help Roma children in academic terms but also enhance social relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma and encourage positive attitudes from the non-Roma towards the Roma. Antigone said (*Antigone*, 163):

Roma and non-Roma children developed relationships in this camp ... (When September comes,) they will recognise each other at the local school, they will hug each other ... What is better than this?

Jason also referred to the non-Roma Greeks' attitudes towards the Roma which can improve at a local level through activities such as the summer camp (*Jason*, 186):

After some days in the summer camp, the cleaner approached me and confessed 'I should tell you something ... When I heard that Roma children are coming, I was appalled! I thought I could not cope with that ... However, when I saw all of you, the group leaders, the assistants, the mediators, the whole team and the children themselves who spend their holidays this way, I totally changed my mind...'. Imagine how many things we can achieve...

Jason also referred to his role as a cultural mediator⁹⁴ in the Byzantine Museum in Athens. He emphasised the role that activities such as museum visits and activities can have on the educational progression of Roma.

As far as the school curriculum is concerned, Pericles and Nestor suggested its enrichment by including themes related to Roma culture which could be discussed in the mainstream classroom. Nestor suggested that one way forward would be to include sources that highlight the Greek Roma's contribution to Greek civilisation and history in the school curriculum. In particular, Nestor said:

The (Greek) Gypsies⁹⁵ are a part of the Greek civilisation. So, parts of this civilisation could be included in the educational process. For example, we talk about the trade during the period of Ottoman domination ... the Gypsies were a mobile population carrying products. So, we could take this cultural element and bring it in the classroom and connect this with the historical events ... We can use this educational capital ... in order to inspire the other students to see that as their own capital as well, because they all take part in a wider cultural scene. It is not exclusively the Gypsies' (capital). The Gypsies were musicians who have affected the rest of the Greeks. So, they are a part of this civilisation, so the Gypsy's cultural capital had affected the other children. And we should not say that 'you do not have any civilisation, you do not know anything, you are nothing'. They are (something). Simply, we do not know that. In the fields of History, Music or Finance they do not know these things, because nobody had been interested in these until now. Now, there are some first attempts. Isn't it like that? We can make these children feel that here we are also a part of this culture...

⁹⁴ In the framework of the European Roma Routes project, the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Greece presented Roma culture and encouraged intercultural communication between Roma and non-Roma. To ensure that the Byzantine and Christian Museum's involvement has a lasting impact, Roma guides were trained as mediators, thus creating a powerful link between the museum and the Roma community (Data from the sites of the Council of Europe - *'Route of Roma Culture and Heritage in Greece'* - and the Byzantine Museum - *'Roma Routes'*).

⁹⁵ I did not use the term Roma while quoting Nestor's words because of his opposition to the use of this term. He used the term Tsigganoi, in the main and he approved of the term Gypsies. I used the term Gypsies when translating in English as I found it more understandable than the term Tsigganoi.

8.5. Discussion

In this chapter, I have examined my participants' suggestions for improving Roma children's education in Greece. On the basis of my participants' accounts, education can be seen as a means for change which can improve Roma's living conditions and contribute to their social mobility and 'emancipation'. When it comes to specific suggestions as to how to improve educational provision, my participants' proposals were varied and covered many different aspects of Roma's education such as when and how interventions should take place and which people should get involved (see Figure 8). In some cases, their suggestions seem contradictory. For example, although most participants are opposed to policies such as positive discrimination measures or separate schooling - which are supposed to separate the Roma from the non-Roma students, the same participants are in favour of targeted measures supporting Roma students' education such as providing financial support or practical help with their homework.

What can be observed is that, in many cases, my participants have reflected on their experiences and the factors which contributed to their own educational success - or the ones which hampered their progression - and that these reflections inform their suggestions. For instance, parental support had been of paramount importance for most participants' educational progression. Thus, parental involvement in Roma's educational interventions was recommended by many participants. Pericles highlighted that his own experiences, as well as his reflecting on them, inform the advice he would give - as a future social worker - to younger Roma pupils and the recommendations he would suggest in terms of policy and practice in order to improve the education of the Roma. An indicative example Pericles gave relates to the benefit he had through participating in football teams. Similarly, according to Pericles, other young Roma can receive help through out-of-school activities and groups, such as sports groups, in terms of enhancing their social and cultural capital which may in turn facilitate educational success.

Teachers' contributions to Roma's future educational success is another suggestion which relates to many of my participants' own school experiences. However, apart from participants' positive experiences with their school teachers (detailed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1.), some of my participants recognised shortcomings in teachers' professional commitments towards the Roma in Greece – echoing Nikolaou's (2009) argument about teachers' holding negative attitudes towards their Roma students. Based on my participants' accounts, I would argue that teachers, like all members of society, need to explore and challenge any prejudices or stereotyped assumptions about the children they teach as it is important to support their Roma students and hold high expectations for their educational future. More importantly, educationalists can make a difference through enhancing the professional and continuing education of teachers, so that they are better able to respect, include and support Roma children.

When talking of affirmative action and policies addressing the entire 'student' population, my participants' suggestions varied. It seems that when my participants support interventions addressing the Roma (separately), they prioritise the practical benefits this process can bring to the Roma community. However, in most cases, my participants consider that the categorisation of Roma as a separate group could potentially result in Roma's further discrimination. Their view reflects Fraser's (1997) argument that "recognition remedies for cultural-valuational injustice always enhance social group differentiation" (p. 23). In this chapter, I have indicated that many participants express their opposition to positive discrimination measures for the Roma (e.g. being against a separate category for Roma university candidates) and they support the realisation of interventions addressing all students or all students coming from vulnerable backgrounds (e.g. low-income families). Thus, it seems that their reasoning is mainly informed by a discourse focusing more on class and socio-economic factors than culture. Thus, for example, many participants seem to support measures (such as allowances, free university services) addressing low-income students, where many Roma

are included, but not measures which directly address the Roma as a separate cultural/ethnic group. This position is also found in Mavroyiorgos' (2014) arguments and suggestions. Mavroyiorgos (2014) highlights the weaker effect of separate interventions for Roma that have been implemented in Greece since 1997 despite their high cost. Furthermore, he claims that, especially nowadays, because of the economic crisis, many students are underprivileged and are in need of additional educational support. Thus, he finds the effectiveness of separate interventions addressing specific groups such as the Roma in Greece to be limited and he recommends the implementation of holistic programmes aimed at tackling social exclusion that are not targeted at specific groups, such as the Roma, immigrants, and the repatriated.

To conclude, my participants made various suggestions about how to improve educational provision for Roma in Greece (as shown in Figure 8). In this chapter, these suggestions have been understood through applying social justice concepts (e.g. in relation to economic, cultural and associational facets). These suggestions inform, to an extent, the implications of my study for policy and practice (see Chapter 9, Section 9.4.). The variety of suggestions on how to improve educational provision for Roma as well as the contradictory views expressed in relation to the proposed suggestions indicate how difficult and complex it is to make policy recommendations in this area (see Chapter 9, Section 9.4.). Any policy discussion on this topic should take into account both the way measures are enacted in practice and the attitudes towards the Roma of non-Roma Greeks. I highlight this point because many participants attributed at least a part of the ineffectiveness of some measures to the lack of the state's real interest in Roma issues and to the widespread negative attitudes held against the Roma in Greek society.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

In Greece, the social inequalities Roma experience in their daily lives are frequently reflected in educational settings. Even though it is now two decades since the introduction of separate interventions addressing Roma students in Greece, significant problems regarding their education, such as erratic school attendance, low performance, high dropout rates, non-completion of compulsory education and exclusionary practices, are still frequently reported (Chatzissavidis, 2007; Mitsis, 2009; Nikolaou, 2009; Dragonas, 2012). Few Roma in Greece enter higher education (Kostouli & Mitakidou, 2009). However, in this thesis, I have focused on how and why it is that some Roma have managed to follow educationally successful pathways against some considerable odds.

The specific objectives of my thesis were as follows:

- to investigate the factors which facilitated my Greek Roma participants' educational success (first research question explored in Chapter 6)
- to examine in what ways my participants described educational success and to what extent they considered themselves to be successful (second research question detailed in Chapter 7)
- to chart my participants' suggestions for improving Roma children's education in Greece (third research question considered in Chapter 8).

This final chapter has three aims. First, it critically reviews the key findings of my thesis. The data collected from my twenty interviews offer insights into a number of issues related not only to the factors that contribute to Roma's educational success but also to policy issues about improving educational provision for the Roma in Greece. Second, this chapter discusses matters related to the limitations of my study and the ways I confronted these challenges. In particular, I discuss my sample and the theoretical framework of my study. Next, this chapter identifies

the implications that my research has for policy and practice. Finally, it suggests areas for further research.

9.2. Key Findings

The key aim of my research was to explore the ways in which twenty Roma, who accessed higher education, accounted for their educational success. My focus was on my participants' perceptions, constructions and experiences of their educational success. I sought to describe and analyse any themes of commonality and difference in their narratives regarding their successful educational pathways and to elicit and learn from my participants' suggestions on how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece. On the basis of each research question, I discussed the findings of my research in my data chapters six, seven and eight. In this section, I now summarise my key findings and draw conclusions from the data analysed.

9.2.1. Understanding Key Factors Involved in the Educational Success of Roma: Towards a Socio-Economic Approach?

The analysis of my participants' stories highlighted the central role that similar factors played in their accounts of their educational success. As detailed in Chapter 6, the key factors involved in my participants' educational success relate to influences of family/home (more specifically the families' socio-economic status and attitudes towards education); influences of school (specifically, teachers who served as mentors; and early success experiences); influences of community (such as Roma positive examples, peers, religious sources and groups, volunteers and helpful adults); influences of locality issues (such as living in urban areas; non-Roma locales; privileged Roma areas); influences of individual and circumstantial issues (such as hard work, persistence, commitment, resilience and luck).

Soon after I met my first research participants, I realised that at the beginning of my study I had taken for granted that my participants were disadvantaged because of their Roma background. However, in the field, I met some participants who had been 'privileged' in terms of their access to economic capital (for instance, seven participants described themselves as wealthy; for more see Chapter 6, Table 6.1) but also in terms of their family habitus (as manifested in positive attitudes towards schooling). In most of these cases, educational progression seemed a 'normal' pathway to follow; educational success had been something 'thinkable' and these participants did not feel like 'fishes out of water' in the field of school. I could argue that these success stories can be explained in terms of Bourdieu's social reproduction theory, where the role of education in reproducing class positions is emphasised (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002): that is to say, the educational success of these Roma can be explained by the amount and type of capital inherited from their family milieu. Although all forms of capital "together constitute advantage and disadvantage in society" (Reay, 2004a, p. 57), economics, stability and prosperity, appeared to have contributed to these students' educational success. In these cases of privileged Roma families, Romaness had not been experienced as a significant barrier to educational success; thus, these participants' class position – as opposed to their ethnicity/culture (Romaness) - had a strong impact on their educational trajectories.

In contrast, attaining a successful educational trajectory seemed more difficult for those Roma students who came from less privileged backgrounds (e.g. those who lived in poorer conditions). My argument here is that Romaness became a (significant/bigger) barrier to educational success when intersected⁹⁶ with other conditions, particularly poverty, which put individuals in almost doubly disadvantaged positions in

⁹⁶The term intersectionality refers to the interweaving of aspects such as race, class, gender/sexuality, faith, disability and age in ways which oppress and marginalise individuals (Bhopal & Preston, 2012; Davis et al., 2015).

terms of ethnicity/economic capital. In all the seven cases where my participants described their families as low-income, influences related to their secondary socialisation (e.g. community groups) played a critical role in supporting their educational trajectories, mainly by having enhanced their social capital: religion for Laertes and Theaetetus; volunteering/NGO work for Hector; sports groups for Pericles; helpful teachers for Pylades (in combination with support because of his disability); religion and also encouragement from the school librarian for Ismene; helpful teachers and private tutoring for Athena. These experiences support and reflect Laughlo's (2000) claim that accessing certain forms of social capital can 'trump' the disadvantages of social class. It seems that in these cases, my participants' individual habitus was transformed in the field of school, during their secondary socialisation (outside of home). Thus, in these cases, changes and social transformations were realised through education (Apple, 2008). These cases highlight a more productive and generative understanding of the Bourdieusian concepts which I have used in this thesis. My participants were active agents in deviating from a pathway which would have fitted them best, and might have been predicted for them, on the basis of their family background and class positioning (i.e. not going on to higher education but practicing itinerant trade instead). In some cases, these participants emphasised the role of individual characteristics in their educational pathways - such as Laertes who emphasised commitment and Athena who focused on resilience.

In my study, it had been difficult to find participants. The small number of participants I eventually accessed (20 participants all over Greece) may go some way to indicate how difficult it can be for Roma students to succeed. In many cases, my participants reported explicitly that it had been very tough for them to succeed. In some cases, experiences of discrimination made their educational progression harder. Moreover, their Roma heritage is always/still there – as a feature which can influence their academic, professional or personal life in a discriminatory way. What emerges as significant is that some participants

were privileged in terms of their economic capital and those who were not, accessed additional sources of capital (cultural and social forms) at school. To conclude, my participants' cases challenge stereotypes about Roma's being uneducated or undervaluing education and could inform policy discussions about how to enhance educational success for the Roma students, as discussed in Section 9.4.

9.2.2. Examining my Participants' Descriptions of Educational Success: Towards the Improvement of Occupational and Social-Class Positions?

Although all my participants have accessed higher education, a key finding of my thesis is that their understanding of the concept of success is not straightforward. My participants' perceptions and experiences indicate that any understanding of 'educational success' is complex because, as detailed in Chapter 7, there are subjective, personal and internal versions of what is meant by 'educational success'.

The way my participants constructed educational success reflects Sturges' (1999) typology (See Chapter 4, Section 4.4.). Specifically, some participants used external criteria to describe educational success. For instance, accessing higher education (12/20 participants) and achieving future professional success after having succeeded in higher education (8 participants saw educational success and professional success as interrelated) were presented as indicators of success. Indeed, a 'utilitarian' rationale which sees higher studies/educational success as a means to achieve professional success was introduced by some participants. In other cases, internal criteria, such as an understanding of educational success in terms of internal cultivation (6/20 participants), were used to describe educational success. Some participants used intangible criteria, such as feelings of 'recognition and influence' when they referred to feeling successful. For instance, eight participants described themselves as successful while almost all my participants expressed their willingness to help younger members of the Roma

community – their desire to help the others was implicitly identified as a part of indicating their own success.

On the basis of my participants' descriptions of educational success, I would argue that their entrance into higher education lends them status and esteem, in particular because most Roma are not educated. As detailed in Chapter 4, in the Greek context, higher studies have been historically regarded as significant for the country's future and provide higher students and graduates with status and esteem (Livanos, 2010). In many cases, my educationally successful participants are respected by others (Roma and non-Roma as well) and in some cases they serve as role models in the Roma community themselves (Chapter 7, Section 7.3.2.). My participants' emphasis on the positive relationship between educational success and professional success, even through a 'utilitarian' approach which regards higher studies/educational success as a means to achieve professional success, shows my participants' desire to improve their occupational and social-class conditions. The justification for higher education as improving occupational conditions and social-class positions has been evident in the Greek context for many decades (Themelis, 2013). The long-standing belief that education results in upward social mobility is well established in Greek society (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2011) making higher studies sought-after. This form of cultural capital which is widespread in Greek middle-class communities is also evident in the habitus of economically successful Roma.

9.2.3. Understanding the Educational Success of Roma Females: Towards or Beyond Gendered Discourses?

When approaching the concept of educational success, many participants - both males and females - talked of traditional gendered practices which still impede the prospects for Roma females' educational progression, (for more see Chapter 7, Section 7.4.). In my study, it had been hard for me to access Roma females who entered higher education.

In general terms, I argue that, according to my six female participants' accounts, their families have moved beyond traditional gendered patterns and thus they overcame those impediments related to gender issues that may still work as barriers for other Roma women.

Although the situation regarding gender is complex, it seems that when Roma females came from more 'privileged' families (such as wealthy backgrounds), then Roma gendered patterns/Romaness did not present as a (significant) barrier to educational progression. For these Roma females, educational success had appeared as 'thinkable' and not as incompatible with their being Roma (see my discussion in Section 9.2.1.) and their being female.

Even though some gendered elements are still evident in my female participants' stories (such as the 'feminised' subjects studied at university), their stories show that change is occurring in relation to gendered attitudes and practices and that this seems to happen more easily when Roma girls come from more privileged backgrounds. However, it may still be much more difficult for many less advantaged Roma girls to progress in education because they face multiple forms of discrimination related to their being females and their being Roma (Antonopoulou, 2011) which situate them in specific roles inside the Roma community (Dragonas, 2012). It must also be remembered that I only managed to access six female participants despite many attempts to increase my cohort of Roma women.

9.2.4. Suggestions for Roma's Future Educational Provision: Social Justice Matters

My participants' suggestions about how to improve educational provision for the Roma in Greece were varied and covered many different aspects such as when and how interventions should take place and which people should get involved. I discussed my participants' suggestions in detail in Chapter 8. In this section, I want to stress a

central finding regarding the reasoning underpinning their suggestions: in most cases, my participants recommended interventions addressing all students in need (e.g. measures supporting poor students – poor Roma included) rather than targeting Roma as a separate cultural/ethnic ‘disadvantaged’ group. This argument echoes Mavroyiorgos’ (2014) emphasis on the need for holistic programmes aimed at tackling social exclusion rather than targeted programmes addressing specific groups, such as the Roma, immigrants, and the repatriated separately.

In many cases, my participants’ suggestions can be usefully understood through social justice concepts. For example, issues regarding the need for redistributive policies that would give Roma better access to material goods have been raised. However, most participants disapproved of Roma being monitored and targeted as a separate group. They were concerned that this ‘treatment’, from a cultural justice perspective, could operate “as a normalising, racialising and essentialising form of classification” (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002, p. 503). At the same time, cultural justice was also called for by some participants in relation to recognition of Roma culture and language in school curriculum as noted in Chapter 8 (Section 8.4.1.9. and Section 8.4.1.11.)

In many cases, some participants’ suggestions (e.g. regarding Roma’s schooling in separate schools) raised issues related to ‘equality of opportunity’ (Gewirtz, 1998). However, most participants did not support positive discrimination measures which could be justified on the basis of ‘equality of outcome’ (Gewirtz, 1998). Similarly to what they noted regarding monitoring, they were opposed to positive discrimination measures because of the implications for cultural justice; the potentially marginalising effects of measures that involve targeting ethnically/culturally defined groups. Some suggestions effectively called for greater ‘associational justice’ as emphasis was given to the need for Roma to participate “fully in decisions which affect the conditions within which they live and act” (Power and Gewirtz, 2001, p. 41). To conclude, most participants’ descriptions about the sort of educational provision they wanted can be better understood in terms of Lynch’s ‘equality of

condition objective’ which “would involve the development of an egalitarian society which would be committed to equality in the living conditions of all members of society (both citizens and non-citizens)” (Lynch, cited in Gewirtz, 1998, p. 472).

The variety of suggestions on how to improve educational provision for Roma as well as the contradictory views expressed in relation to the proposed suggestions reflect, to some extent, the tensions between different forms of justice (such as economic and cultural). As explained in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.4.), the remedies required to address compounded injustices, such the economic and cultural injustices many Roma experience, are complex and can be contradictory (Power & Gewirtz, 2001) because of the tensions between the different forms of social justice involved (Fraser, 1997).

After having summarised and discussed my key data findings, I now turn to the second aim of this chapter – that is, to examine the significant limitations I identified as I moved through the research process.

9.3. Issues and Limitations Arising from my Research Study

During the process of conducting my doctoral thesis, on many occasions, I was concerned with issues relating to how I could have done things better. I recognise that there are a number of issues which can be identified as limitations to my study and a number of questions that need to be revisited in this last chapter. In this section, I discuss those issues that I regard as the most significant.

9.3.1. Issues and Limitations Related to my Sample and Sampling Strategy

The first significant issue which was raised when I entered the field and met people from the Roma community relates to the way I

approached my participants as 'Roma who have succeeded in education'. Sometimes, I felt that, although this description made sense when I wrote my research proposal, it could be problematic in the field. Some potential participants may have felt that I was imposing a dipole between the Roma and the non-Roma, and in some ways reproducing a stereotypical representation of the Roma as uneducated people. Ifigeneia explicitly said she thought she was not suitable for my study as she did not see herself as a Roma who had made it against the odds: she is a Roma raised in a mainstream fairly privileged way. She thought that my description referred to poorer Roma people raised in camps who had managed to progress in education despite facing many more obstacles than she had experienced. However, she was educationally successful – in terms of having been a university graduate - and she describes herself as a Roma (she prefers the term Greek Tsigganos). Thus, she agreed to participate in my study. In general, all my participants had entered higher education and described themselves as Roma (except for Hector who emphasised his Muslim identity although he agreed to take part in my study).

A second point which concerned me relates to my sample not being representative of the Roma in Greece more generally. In Bourdieusian terms, a number of my participants seem privileged in terms of their family habitus and/or in terms of economic, cultural and/or social capital (for more see Chapter 6, Table 6.1. and Appendix 14). It is interesting to note that some Roma participants' stories revealed that Romaness was not a significant part of their lives and, for others, Romaness had not affected their educational progression in a negative way.

Third, as mentioned in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5.), after strenuous efforts, I obtained access to some Roma people with successful educational experiences through snowballing techniques (Flick, 2009). However, I realised that a potential problem could be created by the fact that my sample might have included only those educated Roma within a connected network. Therefore, first, I tried to access different 'networks'

and gatekeepers and find educated Roma in different regions of Greece; second, through my networks, I attempted to find out about any other potential participants. However, there might still be the danger of not having accessed other networks or different participants. Moreover, in some cases, I could not be sure about how willing some participants were to take part in my study as, in some cases, they might have felt they had to participate because certain people asked them to. For instance, maybe some participants felt obliged to participate because highly respected people, such as university professors, had asked them to support my work. My argument here is that, although all my participants took part in my study on a voluntary basis, I felt that some of them may not have been highly motivated to take part or even to be more involved in my project (e.g. be interviewed again in the future). A dilemma I faced, therefore, was whether I should focus on fewer participants who seemed more motivated to take part in my study and conduct more than one interview with each of them or whether I should expand my sample and interview all the participants (bigger sample) on one occasion. I decided on the latter course of action and I believe that this choice enabled my wider access to a greater diversity of experiences and perspectives of Roma's educational success in the Greek context.

Another issue I would like to discuss relates to the differences among my participants, such as their age, the areas where they were raised, their gender and their socio-economic backgrounds which all illustrate the heterogeneity within Roma communities. Although I believe that these differences between my participants add to my study (showing that these aspects should be taken into account), I think that an emphasis on a specific group of Roma with the same characteristics may have offered a deeper insight into some issues. For example, having accessed Roma in different parts of Greece helped me shed light on Roma's heterogeneity and on the different impact that different locales can have on the education of Roma in Greece (e.g. mixed areas vs Roma areas; hostile environments vs tolerant areas etc.). However, an emphasis on the Roma of one area (e.g. Agia Varvara in Athens) could have helped

me explore in more depth some complex issues related to one specific locale (such as the impact of social networks on Roma of the same area, the 'ethos' which predominates there and the local interventions targeting the Roma). Nevertheless, I recognise that some of these issues raised here could inform further research (e.g. the need for local studies) and may not even have been recognised as important if I had not included Roma participants with many differences among them in my study.

Finally, some of my participants' background stories and experiences were 'unexpected'. For example, I was expecting only to meet Roma students who had been high-achievers in school and entered university directly from school after having performed well in the nationwide exams. However, I met some mature students who had returned to school as adults; some students entered university through different access pathways, such as special categories of students (e.g. Muslim/disabled), different school type (e.g. Second Chance School; Religious School; Night School); and after re-sitting the nationwide exams. Aspects of unexpected biographical details also concerned socio-economic background (e.g. Ifigeneia), gender issues (e.g. Theaetetus) and medical conditions (e.g. Pylades). For instance, as explained in Chapter 5 (Section 5.7.2.), Ifigeneia was an 'elite' participant. In Theaetetus' case, I knew that my potential participant was studying Theology but only when I met him in person, I realised that he was a priest-monk. In this case, my characteristics (e.g. gender) might have affected the interview process in a negative way (indeed, he raised gendered issues explicitly when saying that my being a female who sat close to him for four hours had been a concern for him). During some of the interviews, there were issues that I did not explore in much depth or handle in an effective way as they were not the key focus of my study – such as intersections of Romaness with religion or disabilities. For instance, Pylades emphasised experiences of discrimination because of his disability and not his Roma background. Moreover, two participants were Muslim Roma.

9.3.2. Issues and Limitations of my Theoretical Resources

One issue which could be considered as a limitation in my study relates to the theoretical resources I have used. As far as the concept of educational success is concerned, I deployed a conceptualisation of educational success as being access to higher education. My participants' cases seemed exceptional to me because most Roma frequently underachieve in education. However, many participants did not perceive themselves as successful despite their entrance to higher education. Also, the term educational success can be applied in a relative way and was applied in different ways by my participants. For instance, as explained in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.), universities are considered to be of higher status than technological educational institutions; some fields (e.g. Law) are more prestigious than others (Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2010). So, some participants who entered universities (AEI) could be considered to be 'more successful' than those who entered technological educational institutions (ATEI). Similarly, some participants who studied Law or Medicine could be considered more successful than others who studied less prestigious fields. Furthermore, entrance at university today seems easier to achieve than in the past. As explained in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.), after the 1997 educational reform, the number of places in higher education almost doubled (Sianou-Kyrgiou & Tsiplakides, 2009). For example, in the cases of older participants, it might have been more difficult to enter university when they did. In these cases, 'educational success' might seem more appropriate to describe these participants' educational progression. Those Roma who completed their non-compulsory education some decades ago might have achieved more compared to younger Roma who have entered university more recently. Therefore, 'educational success', as measured by access to higher education, has a relative and perhaps temporal meaning.

In my analysis, the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus and capital have helped me interpret the factors which were involved in my participants' success. However, the use of a Bourdieusian theoretical approach has some difficulties, impediments and limitations. In some

cases, in order to support my theoretical arguments, I cite other studies and research findings from studies which might have used some concepts (such as social capital) but have done so following a different interpretation (e.g. Coleman or Putnam). For example, I referred to the 'dark side of social capital' in a way that Field (2003) developed following Putnam's approach. However, the Bourdieusian framework had been central in my work and I only have used other approaches, when appropriate, in order to elaborate and deepen my analysis.

At this point, I need to make a note regarding sex/gender. Traditional patriarchal attitudes frequently practiced by Roma families are reported in the Greek literature (Dragonas, 2012). In the field, I confronted some difficulties in finding a sample of educationally successful Roma women to interview. My data analysis raised sex/gendered issues as significant in Roma girls' educational progression which, however, need to be explored in more depth.

9.4. Implications for Policy and Practice

In this section I consider some of the main implications of my findings for policy and practice regarding the education of Roma in Greece. Following the argument that "social justice can be achieved when people take action to make a difference" (Chapman & West-Burnham, 2010, p. 155), my aim here is to focus on some key aspects that could be used to inform future policy discussions about how to address the injustices that the Roma experience in Greece as well as ways through which to improve their educational outcomes.

In the last two decades, there has been an increased emphasis on some crucial areas of well-being, such as housing, healthcare, education and employment at a European level and in Greece, at least in terms of policy rhetoric (EC, 2014). One of the dilemmas in policy work is the well documented gap between policy and practice (Ng, 2008). In the case of the Roma in Greece, the rhetoric is based on discourses of inclusion and, to some extent, elements of social justice. However there is a need to

ensure that EU obligations are attended to as education policy is no longer worked through by the European Council at a national level. “EU programmes and initiatives act in effect as policies *across* EU countries through the process of harmonisation” (Ball, 2013, p. 44). There has been widespread acceptance of the need for domestic, European and international stakeholders to work together in order to exchange best practices and interventions in order to promote the education and the social inclusion of the Roma more widely (Farkas, 2014). However, there are still many gaps between policy rhetoric and outcomes in practice in the Greek context that need further consideration.

The lack of official up-to-date and accurate data regarding the Roma in Greece is the first point which needs more consideration. The Roma in Greece are Greek citizens and are not formally and legally recognised as holding a minoritised status – unlike the situation in other European nations (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.). However, the discrimination that still shapes the life-chances of the Roma in Greece may be better addressed and reduced if there were more accurate data about aspects such as housing, educational attainment, labour market opportunities and uptake of higher education places and matters related to social mobility. There has been an international upsurge in the demands for policy-making to be better informed by evidence and data that clarifies needs and disparities in education provision (Slavin, 2002; Cartwright & Hardie, 2012). There is also a powerful critique that highlights some shortcomings in this evidence-based policy approach. There are complexities in detailing which data is useful, what counts as evidence and dilemmas in terms of recommending interventions on the basis of some kinds of data sets (Head, 2007). However, having more detailed evidence of exclusion and under-participation in education would at least reveal the nature and scale of the situation. This sort of data could be useful in sculpting policies that could be targeted directly towards ameliorating any inequalities that were evidenced by the data.

Such an attempt might provoke tensions in terms of social justice theory - what Fraser (1997) identified as ‘the redistribution-recognition

dilemma' (for more see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4.). Following Fraser's (1997) approach, I would argue that any redistributive interventions aimed at redressing the injustices caused by the unfair allocations of social goods, including educational opportunities, to the Greek Roma may potentially result in creating/increasing injustices of recognition – due to the recognition of the Roma as a separate group, and perhaps a 'deficit' community in 'need' of additional support. However, this process seems inevitable, at least in the short term, if it is hoped to redress the inequalities experienced by the Roma in effective and measurable ways.

At a European level, a number of targeted measures have been recommended in order to encourage Roma participation in and completion of secondary and tertiary education: these include financial incentives, such as scholarships, accommodation allowances (residential subsidy), transport support for Roma students, as well as career counseling, tailored support and individualised mentoring (Council of the European Union, 2013⁹⁷; FRA, 2014). These sorts of supportive policies could serve to widen Roma participation in Greek higher education and would benefit Greek society more generally through increasing the talent pool in the labour market. Widening access to higher education means that some Greek Roma who would otherwise not have accessed university will have "the opportunity to study at university level" and get "exposed to the benefits that such an education can accrue" (Smith, 2012, p. 115). However, it is important to monitor and document the progress being made by these sorts of affirmative action to ensure that they are being enacted and that they are making real sustained changes (Court et al., 2005).

Policy work needs also to focus on initial and continuing teacher education in relation to intercultural issues. Both the significance of the mentoring role of certain teachers as a factor in my participants' success

⁹⁷ I refer to the document *Council Recommendation on Effective Roma Integration Measures in the Member States*.

and the discriminatory practices of other teachers as detailed by my participants highlight the need for teacher training to recognise intercultural educational dimensions in Greece and be supported in more socially just pedagogy (Paleologou, 2004). At a European level, reforming teacher training is recommended as a measure to support Roma integration (European Council, 2013) and training for educational staff that has an emphasis on equal treatment of Roma children is also suggested (FRA, 2014). The importance of teachers' continuing professional development and training on issues related to diversity, race and ethnicity is evidenced in the literature (Lander, in Race & Lander 2014; Race, in Race & Lander, 2014). For example, Lander (2011) argues that, in the UK, teachers' and educational professionals' dedication and commitment to the well-being and achievement of Roma pupils and a critical engagement with issues of equality in the classroom can make a difference to the lives and to the educational progression of these children in school. Greek policies need to address the initial and continuing education of teachers (in practice and not just rhetorically) and ensure that all school staff are better able to support their Roma students and all minoritised students in the school system because "the centrality of teachers and their pedagogies to enhanced educational outcomes and more socially just effects of schooling" is powerfully influential (Lingard & Mills, 2007, p. 234). One way forward will be to listen to the experiences of the Roma themselves and involve them directly in the policy process; in associational justice terms, this may help the Roma to participate more fully and with greater agency in decisions that impact their lives.

Another key area that needs to be considered in terms of policy and practice is the highly contentious and somewhat divisive area of separate schooling (or not) for the Roma. Here I acknowledge Jason's claim that, "Separate schools get established because of (the Greeks') racism (against the Roma)". Separate schooling can segregate Roma students (Farkas, 2014) and can signal their active exclusion from mainstream schools (Varnava-Skoura et al., 2012). Redrawing school catchment maps may need to be considered - so that Roma areas are

included in catchment areas where 'good' mainstream schools exist. Farkas (2014) suggests that bussing programmes may be useful in order to allow Roma students to access 'good' mainstream schools outside the Roma settlements and claims that this may be a better alternative than setting up separate (segregated) Roma schools inside the camps. However, according to some of my participants, separate schooling - to which they are opposed in principle – is sometimes viewed as a valuable short-term solution in areas where Roma live in poor camps near hostile communities. Thus, even in the light of evidence and data-informed studies, policies and practices need to be contextually mediated as local factors may require differentiated measures to help support the education of Roma. The fact that these separate schools currently exist *de facto* and not *de jure* raises additional concerns. My point here is that the recognition of the existing Roma schools as such could potentially help remedy the situation through the provision of additional measures to improve the quality of these schools, such as through providing extra funding and more qualified teachers.

One point that emerged powerfully from what my participants had to say was that they saw the role of parents and the family as critical in encouraging educational progression (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2.). Thus, policy-makers should support and promote the greater involvement of Roma parents in their children's schooling, a suggestion which is also recommended by the European Council (2013). As highlighted in Chapter 8 (Section 8.4.1.5.), although frequently parents from ethnic groups are positioned as being less interested in their children's education by schools, it is often the way that schools work that does not encourage parental involvement in school life (Crozier & Davies, 2007). The positive influence of parental engagement in their children's schooling and achievement is evidenced in the literature (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2008) and this is a matter that could also be addressed in teacher's professional education and training to support them in working effectively and sensitively with parents of minoritised backgrounds.

Any policy discussions regarding the Roma also need to look carefully at gendered issues (European Council, 2013). In Greece, patriarchal practices still seem to prevent some Roma girls from attending school and progressing into secondary and tertiary education (Dragonas, 2012). Action might need to be taken at critical moments during Roma students' schooling, such as the transition from primary to secondary education (when many Roma students in Greece - especially girls – leave school) and from lower to upper secondary school levels where the same pattern emerges (FRA, 2014). Here, I have in mind interventions aimed at encouraging Roma girls' educational progression - and preventing early marriages - as well as measures such as special provision for (Roma) female students who are pregnant/mothers. So far, the only provision for Greek female students who are mothers is that they are included in a category of students (home-schooled/'Κατ' ιδίαν διδαχθέντες') who have the right to sit their exams at the end of each school year in order to continue into the next grade.⁹⁸ However, and while I have not had the space to attend to this matter in more detail, issues of intersectionality need careful and sensitive consideration by policy makers if they are to have a chance of making a difference to the lives of those they are working with/for (Davis, et al., 2015).

The use of the Romani language in school settings is another aspect which needs to be considered in policy and in practice. First, more flexible approaches to multi-lingual language teaching and learning are supported in the international literature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.1.) and, second, other students' mother tongues (such Albanian and Russian) are currently supported in mainstream schools because of educational policy initiatives in Greece. In social justice terms, some of my participants saw a need to recognise and value Roma culture and language in the mainstream school curriculum (for all children and school

⁹⁸ See Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Decision, JO726 (4.12.1985). Δικαίωμα για «κατ' ιδίαν» διδασκαλία και συμμετοχή σε κατατακτήριες εξετάσεις, ένεκα κυήσεως για μαθήτριες Μέσης Γεν. Εκπ/σης [Provision of the right to receive home schooling and participate in placement exams to pregnant female secondary students]

students) as detailed in Chapter 8 (Section 8.4.1.9. and Section 8.4.1.11.). The employment of Roma (teaching) assistants could help Roma students' educational progression, in particular during the early years of their schooling as practical assistance in the classroom can be supportive when students' community language differs from the school language (Race, 2015). However, as my participants also noted, the inclusion of aspects of Roma culture in the school curriculum and a recognition of their contributions to Greek society over time, would enrich everyone's appreciation of the Roma.

Before I finish this section, I want to highlight a central matter which, in my view, must be taken into account in any policy discussions about the Roma in Greece and how best to support their educational progression. Roma people must take part in any policy-making processes regarding Roma issues. In associational justice terms, this is one essential way which will enable them to participate "fully in decisions which affect the conditions within which they live and act" (Power & Gewirtz, 2001, p. 41).

9.5. Research Areas for Further Development

While completing my thesis, I identified the need for further research into the following areas. First, it would be useful to explore what is meant by success by examining more cases of successful Roma people. In some cases, Roma who are not highly qualified (e.g. some Roma elected representatives) were recognised as successful by some of my participants. In other cases, Roma people who have progressed in non-compulsory levels of education were considered successful regardless of whether or not they had a university degree. Thus, these Roma's pathways as well as their suggestions on how to improve Roma's education can be of value. Moreover, issues of social mobility need to be explored in relation to how Roma follow upward social mobility trends through education or through other ways as noted in Section 9.2.2.

A second topic which needs to be explored further relates to identity issues. In some cases, the educated Roma in my sample reported that they felt more accepted by the non-Roma Greeks. In other cases, educated Roma reported being 'othered' by other Roma; being educated may sometimes create a distance from the usual Roma patterns (Gkofa, 2016). Finally, Roma may still experience discrimination regardless of any educational success achieved. All these matters raise identity and power issues as being important in any discussion about the educational success of Roma. It could be worthwhile to explore how feelings of 'Greekness' and 'Romaness' influence Roma's educational pathways during childhood/teenager-hood. Further explanation of intersections of identity aspects which potentially situate some Roma students in less advantaged positions, such as Romaness and Muslim religion or gender, could shed light on aspects of Roma education.

In Chapter 7, I raised some gendered issues in relation to my female participants' educational progression. Patriarchal attitudes seem to pattern Roma females' lives even today. Further research needs to be conducted in relation to Roma female students' education in order to examine the potential impact issues of gender can have on these girls' educational pathways. Moreover, taking into account that many Roma girls usually do not continue into secondary education (because of early marriages), further research on possible forms of action that need to be taken should get conducted.

Examining the cases of those Roma students who are currently in non-compulsory secondary education could also be of great value. The exploration of the factors which help these students to stay in the system could better inform policies on how to spread the 'success effect'. I have kept the contact details of all my participants and interviewing them again after some years may also yield insights on what happened in their continuing pathways. A longitudinal study would enable a deeper examination of the concept of success focusing on higher levels of education and on the participants' occupations as well (e.g. did they

continue into post-graduate studies? Did they find a job? Did they experience discrimination while searching for a job?)

9.6. Contribution and Final Words

I want to end my work by considering the contribution of my thesis. I want to highlight the fact that I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to undertake this research into Roma's educational success in Greece, uncovering a lacuna in the relevant literature which has mostly focused on Greek Roma's educational disadvantage. My study offers insights into my Roma participants' educational pathways, which was possible only as a result of their devoting their time and sharing their 'success stories' with me. At the same time, my thesis rejects stereotypical arguments regarding Roma's alleged undervaluing of education. In contrast, through this thesis, it is obvious that the educational success of Roma is not only feasible but, as my participants' stories highlight, it had already been realised in many cases. Perhaps the most important contribution of my thesis is that it has offered an opportunity to listen to the voices of educationally successful Roma. In this study, it is the educationally successful Roma who talk of their stories and it is they who make suggestions for their community. I hope their voices will be taken into consideration in a more active way in policy-making as, in associational justice terms, the Roma need to be included in decision-making about the conditions that shape their lives.

Before I finish, I should confess that, especially when my participants referred to the negative events of discrimination that they had experienced or when they were talking of the difficulties that many Roma children still face in Greek schools, they seemed to be expecting from me much more than a doctoral study can do (e.g. they hoped that I could change this situation). I recognise my participants' concern about the education of Roma and, although I realise that my study's impact may well be limited in practice, I hope it can inform relevant policy discussions. I finish this chapter with an extract from one of my participants' interviews

which summarises many participants' concerns and will continue to inspire me:

Through this research study that you are conducting... you could inspire other people. ... You could become what we call a "chain link". ... When I met Menelaos and Phaedra⁹⁹, I was inspired by them. You can inspire people. I mean just this; to have a closer relationship with them. This woman (my neighbour) had held my hand, experienced the risk and took me to the extra lessons. The other person talked to me in person. This is very important. I mean that the institutions are very important. But, the people (there) play an important role in most cases and you do not know (cannot predict) who is going to get affected/inspired by you. Something might happen/change. And this is the reason why your study is really significant; it can bring crucial results, if you invest in that. I mean if it is not for you just to get your PhD diploma and then ok "What I am going to gain?"... Through this study, you can inspire people to have school success... This is the crucial point. So, you get some parts of us, you use them externally, but through this transfer, you might inspire. This should be a goal for you...

(Nestor, 108-110)

⁹⁹ Pseudonyms for two educated Roma that Nestor had met.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Data Concerning Roma's School Registration

Data from the Greek Ministry of Education show that during the school year 2011-2012, 13,734 Roma students were registered for primary education which comprises around 2.5% of the total student population of all children in Greece. 7,261 of these Roma students were boys (53%) while 6,473 were girls (47%). 1,204 (8.7%) of the Roma students in primary education had attended pre-school education (nursery school/Nipiagogio/Νηπιαγωγείο) which is compulsory in Greece (for one year).

During the school year 2011-2012, 2,141 Roma students were registered for secondary education. 1,313 of these Roma students were boys (61.3%) and 828 were girls (38.7%). 96% of the Roma students who attended secondary education during the school year 2011-2012 were attending lower high school (Gymnasio/Γυμνάσιο), which is compulsory in Greece. The rest, 4% (82 Roma students), attended non-compulsory types of secondary schools.

As shown in Table 1, 50 out of 82 (61%) of the Roma who attended non-compulsory secondary education were males and 32 out of 82 (39%) were females. Furthermore, only 24 of the total (29.2%) attended (general) high school. This type of high school is the dominant provider of non-compulsory education in Greece, leading students to enter high status tertiary Greek institutions. However, most Roma students attended non-compulsory secondary schools which tend to be related to gaining technical and professional skills and do not easily lead on to entrance to high status tertiary institutions.

In addition, although the data does not relate to the same cohort of Roma students, it can be observed that as Roma students move on through schooling, gender tends to shape their levels of school registration, as shown in Table 2.

Type of School	Male students	Female students	Total
High School	12	12	24
Evening High School	5	1	6
Professional High School (EPAL)	28	13	41
Evening Professional High School (EPAL)	3	0	3
Professional School (EPAS)	1	6	7
Special High School	1	0	1
TOTAL	50	32	82

Table 1. Roma students' registration for Greek non-compulsory secondary education (school year 2011-2012)

Level	Roma Males	Roma Females	Total	Male Percentage	Female Percentage
Primary Education	7,261	6,473	13,734	53%	47%
Secondary Education	1,313	828	2,141	61%	39%

Table 2. Roma students' registration for Greek primary and secondary education according to gender (school year 2011-2012)

It should be noted that the data include only those Roma students registered at schools according to the database of the Greek Ministry of Education which I accessed in 2013. I did not access any official data for the number of Roma who are not registered or who dropped out early. In general, according to Kostouli and Mitakidou (2009), any type of data concerning Roma education is unreliable. Moreover, in 2007, Chatzissavidis (2007) noted that almost half of the Roma children of school age are still not registered at school and many Roma children

continue to drop out early without acquiring basic reading and writing skills. As a result, the above figures only partially describe the current situation for Roma education in Greece.

Access to data related to schools where only Roma students are registered was not available. Because of the fact that the Roma are not regarded as a separate group in Greece, schools where only Roma students are registered are not identified as forming a separate category. However, according to some information I collected from the Ministry of Education, in 2006, 14 schools of this kind existed and 15% of the Roma students who were attending primary education were registered at them.¹ There is no reason to believe that these Roma schools no longer exist, as they remained unaffected by the changes the Ministry of Education attempted under the merging and foundation of primary and secondary schools for the school year 2011-2012.² Moreover, new Roma schools have been established, as shown in the example of Aspropyrgos (see Chapter 1).

¹ During the school year 2005-2006, 9,884 Roma students were registered at primary schools. 1,477 of these Roma students were registered at Roma schools in the following Greek areas: A) West Attica (Zefiri), B) Achaea (Meganitis), C) Euboea (Kastella), D) Elis (Kentro), E) Karditsa (Karditsa, Sofades), F) Corinthia (Zevgolio), G) Cyclades (Karterados, Mesaria, Vothonas), H) Xanthi (Xanthi, Kimmeria, Evlalos).

² Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (2011). *Συνενώσεις-Ιδρύσεις σχολικών μονάδων Πρωτοβάθμιας και Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης για τη σχολική χρονιά 2011-2012* [*Primary and Secondary Schools' Merging - Foundation for the school year 2011-2012*]. Retrieved March 13, 2012 from http://www.minedu.gov.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2332%3A13-03-11-synenoseis-idryseis-sxolikon-monadon-protobathmias-kai-deyterobathmias-ekpaideysis-gia-ti-sxoliki-xronia-2011-2012&catid=80%3Adeltia-typoy&Itemid=806&lang=el

Appendix 2. Supportive Educational Programmes Addressing and/or Involving Roma Students

Roma children are often taught through supportive programmes which address students with special characteristics. The interventions, programmes and tutorials described below address the whole student population with an emphasis on students who face difficulties on the basis of their fluency in Greek or in terms of their achievement.

Educational Priority Zones: Reception and Tutorial Classes

According to Greek Law³ and the relevant document from the Greek Ministry of Education,⁴ since 2010, educational priority zones (Ζώνες Εκπαιδευτικής Προτεραιότητας) have been implemented geared towards offering academic support to those students who do not speak Greek (or are not fluent in Greek). This programme includes:

- i) Reception Classes (Τάξεις Υποδοχής) I* (attendance up to 1 year),
- ii) Reception Classes (Τάξεις Υποδοχής) II* (attendance up to 2 years) (groups with a minimum of 9 and maximum of 17 students), and
- iii) Supportive Tutorial Classes (Ενισχυτικά Φροντιστηριακά Τμήματα)* (from 3 to 8 students in a class, up to 10 hours per week).

³ Law 3879/2010, JO A163 (21.09.2010), Articles 26 §1α and §1β. Ανάπτυξη της Διά Βίου Μάθησης και λοιπές διατάξεις [Development of Lifelong Learning and other directives].

⁴ Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. Document 'Βασικές κατευθύνσεις και οδηγίες για την ίδρυση και λειτουργία Τάξεων Υποδοχής (Τ.Υ.) I και II Ζ.Ε.Π. και Ενισχυτικών Φροντιστηριακών Τμημάτων (Ε.Φ.Τ.) Ζ.Ε.Π. για σχολικό έτος 2012-2013 (Αρ.Πρωτ.164871/Γ1/01-11-2013/ΥΠΑΙΘ, ΑΔΑ: Β4ΤΖ9-Θ0Σ)' [Guidelines for the establishment and operation of the educational priority zones Reception Classes I and II and Supportive Tutorial Classes for the school year 2012-2013 (No. 64871/Γ1/01-11-2013/ΥΠΑΙΘ, ΑΔΑ: Β4ΤΖ9-Θ0Σ)].

The Reception Classes (Τάξεις Υποδοχής) run simultaneously alongside the mainstream courses and are designed to help students adapt and fully integrate within a reasonable time into the mainstream classes for which they are registered. There are two levels of reception classes: i) Reception Classes I for students who do not speak Greek at all and ii) Reception Classes II for students with moderate levels of competency. The students attend their regular mainstream classes, but at the same time they attend some language courses outside the regular classroom. These courses can last up to two years.

The Supportive Tutorial Classes (Ενισχυτικά Φροντιστηριακά Τμήματα) provide additional after school instructional support to students who have not attended reception classes and face language difficulties or have attended reception courses but still face difficulties in their mainstream classes.

On the basis of the locales (of the schools) which are included in the educational priority zones, it makes sense to hypothesise that many Roma students attend the Reception Classes I and II and the Supportive Tutorial Classes described above (although the programme does not target specific groups of students, such as the Roma).

Educational provision to improve achievement (for the whole student population)

Additional support is also provided to students who need extra academic help. In particular, in primary education, supportive tutorials (enishytikh didaskalia/ενισχυτική διδασκαλία) can be offered to students mainly in the two first classes of primary school. This is delivered in groups of up to 5 students and covers literacy and numeracy for 1 to 2 teaching hours per day, with a maximum 6 hours per week.⁵ Similar

⁵ Presidential Decree 462/1991, JO 171. Αξιολόγηση και ενισχυτική διδασκαλία μαθητών Δημοτικού Σχολείου [Assessment and in-school remedial tutoring of primary school pupils]. Article 5. Ενισχυτική διδασκαλία [Remedial Tutoring].

educational interventions are provided at the secondary level, both in lower high schools (enishytikh didaskalia/ενισχυτική διδασκαλία) and in high schools (additional teaching support/πρόσθετη διδακτική στήριξη). As far as the additional teaching support in high schools is concerned, students in groups of 5 to 20 individuals can take part in any courses offered, for from 1 to 3 hours per day. According to the relevant document about its organisation and implementation,⁶ the aim of this programme is to reduce the numbers of school dropouts as well as to enhance attainment thereby increasing the chances of these students progressing to higher education.

⁶ Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.Ministerial Decision (2), 2996/2013, No. 172435/Γ7/13-11-2013/ΥΠΑΙΘ.Οργάνωση και Λειτουργία της Πρόσθετης Διδακτικής Στήριξης 2013-2014 [Organisation and Implementation of supplementary teaching support 2013-2014].

Appendix 3. Information Sheet for Participants

Postgraduate Research Study

Successful educational paths among students from disadvantaged groups: the case of Roma/Gypsies in Greece (draft)

Protocol Number: REP(EM)/11/12-61

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

We would like to invite you to participate in this original postgraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

- **What is the purpose of the study:** This research will explore cases of Roma/Gypsies who have continued into Further and Higher Education in Greece. The factors that encourage you to go on will also be analysed. Furthermore, what will be particularly interesting to investigate is what you suggest to improve Roma/Gypsies' children education in Greece. The research attempts to better understand and interpret the cases of Roma/Gypsies who succeed in Greek education hoping to yield results which will be important for developing suitable policies for the education of Roma/Gypsy students in Greece.
- **Who is being recruited:** I am recruiting Roma/Gypsies who study/have studied at Institutions of Further and Higher Education in Greece.
- **What will participation involve:** You will be interviewed three times in a short period of time at any (public) place of your convenience at a time and date to be agreed between you (each of you) and myself. The interviews will last between one hour and one hour and a half each. This interview is intended as an opportunity for you to express your experiences, your thoughts and your expectations. The interviews will be audio recorded, subject to your permission and later will be transcribed into text form. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. You would be very welcome to a copy of the final report.

As part of the presentation of results, your own words may be used in text form. This will be anonymised, so that you cannot be identified from what you said. All of the research data will be stored at Kings College London inside my personal locker for 1 year. While I am in Greece I will keep them in my home locked inside my family safe. Please note that:

- A. You can decide to stop the interview at any point
- B. You need not answer questions that you do not wish to
- C. Your name will be removed from the information and anonymised. It will not be possible to identify anyone from my reports on this study.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw during the interview or any time up until 1st August 2014 and without giving a reason. I mention this date because this is expected to be the final stage of my data analysis. If you withdraw from the study, all data will be withdrawn and destroyed. If

you do decide to take part, you will be given this Information Sheet to keep and be asked to sign a Consent Form.

- **Any risks:** I cannot foresee any risks to your taking part in this research. All the interviews will focus on your experiences, ideas and practice of education and there is no reason to predict that any delicate issues will be brought to the centre of the conversation. You are welcome to interrupt the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.
- **Possible benefits:** I believe that taking part in this research will give you the chance to share your experiences. Concurrently, you will be participating in research that will hopefully contribute to the improvement of educational policy concerning Roma/Gypsy education in Greece.
- **Arrangements for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality:** To ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 you must be informed of what information will be held about you and who will have access to it. As mentioned above, the interviews will be audio recorded, subject to your permission and later will be transcribed into text form. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. It should be made clear that no one else (external agency) is being used to transcribe data. Your identity will be kept confidential; the transcription of interviews will be carried out by myself and on the transcripts I will use the pseudonyms that you will choose. To ensure your anonymity, the final report will mention only these pseudonyms and any other information that could lead to the identification of you or other particular people mentioned will be omitted or changed.

I will only use my personal computer and electronic devices during the research, all the data will be encrypted following King's College Encryption Guidance and I will use passwords which I will select and secure according to the guidance of King's College London IT Security Framework (Password Policy).

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Supervisor: Meg Maguire, Professor of Sociology of Education
Department of Education & Professional Studies, School of Social Science & Public Policy, King's College London
Room 2/3, Waterloo Bridge Wing (Franklin-Wilkins Building), Waterloo Road, London, SE1 9NH
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7848 3150, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7848 3182, E-mail: meg.maguire@kcl.ac.uk

Researcher: Panagiota Gkofa, MPhil/PhD student
Department of Education & Professional Studies, School of Social Science & Public Policy, King's College London
Room G9, Waterloo Bridge Wing (Franklin-Wilkins Building), Waterloo Road, London, SE1 9NH
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7848 3833, E-mail: panagiota.gkofa@kcl.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this Information Sheet.

Appendix 4. Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and listened to an explanation about the research.



(Draft) Title of Study: Successful educational paths among students from disadvantaged groups: the case of Roma/Gypsies in Greece

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP(EM)/11/12-61

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Please tick if you agree. Otherwise, leave the initial box blank:

- I consent to my interview being recorded. ☐
- I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the 1st of August 2014. ☐
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. ☐

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

Investigator's Statement:

I _____

confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed

Date

Appendix 5. Letter of Ethical Approval

22nd May 2012

PanagiotaGkofa
Department of Education & Professional



Dear Panagiota,

REP(EM)/11/12-61 'Successful educational paths among students from disadvantaged groups: the case of Roma/Gypsies in Greece.'

I am pleased to inform you that the above application has been reviewed by the E&M Research Ethics Panel that FULL APPROVAL is now granted.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/index.php?id=247>).

For your information ethical approval is granted until 21/05/15. If you need approval beyond this point you will need to apply for an extension to approval at least two weeks prior to this explaining why the extension is needed, (please note however that a full re-application will not be necessary unless the protocol has changed). You should also note that if your approval is for one year, you will not be sent a reminder when it is due to lapse.

Ethical approval is required to cover the duration of the research study, up to the conclusion of the research. The conclusion of the research is defined as the final date or event detailed in the study description section of your approved application form (usually the end of data collection when all work with human participants will have been completed), not the completion of data analysis or publication of the results. For projects that only involve the further analysis of pre-existing data, approval must cover any period during which the researcher will be accessing or evaluating individual sensitive and/or un-anonymised records. Note that after the point at which ethical approval for your study is no longer required due to the study being complete (as per the above definitions), you will still need to ensure all research data/records management and storage procedures agreed to as part of your application are adhered to and carried out accordingly.

If you do not start the project within three months of this letter please contact the Research Ethics Office.

Should you wish to make a modification to the project or request an extension to approval you will need approval for this and should follow the guidance relating to modifying approved applications:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/applications/modifications.aspx>

The circumstances where modification requests are required include the addition/removal of participant groups, additions/removal/changes to research methods, asking for additional data from participants, extensions to the ethical approval period. Any proposed modifications should only be carried out once full approval for the modification request has been granted.

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the approving committee/panel. In the event of an untoward event or an adverse reaction a full report must be made to the Chair of the approving committee/review panel within one week of the incident.

Please would you also note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you from time to time to ascertain the status of your research.

If you have any query about any aspect of this ethical approval, please contact your panel/committee administrator in the first instance (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/contact.aspx>). We wish you every success with this work.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Butcher
Research Ethics Officer

Appendix 6. Research Participants: An Overview

1. Alcmene: Alcmene is a 25 years old female who has recently completed her university studies in Philology and gives (Greek) language lessons to Roma and non-Roma students. Alcmene was raised in a Roma area in a city in North Greece. She had always lived inside this Roma area, even during her university studies. Her parents were wealthy with mother being an itinerant trader with a convenience store and her father a driver. They encouraged her educational progression. Alcmene says that her university professors had reacted in a very positive way when they found out that she was a Roma. Alcmene argues that their positive response might be related to her field of study which focuses on languages and cultures. Alcmene emphasises the similarities between the Roma and the non-Roma and explained that, in her view, differences exist only in relation to cultural practices and customs. However, she argued that some constructed images and 'labelling' (e.g. those perpetuated by the media) exaggerate some minor differences. She is married under the Roma tradition to her partner and they have a son. However, as the state does not recognise this type of marriage, Alcmene's marriage is not registered and accordingly, she is considered to be an unmarried mother and her son bears her surname.

2. Antigone: Antigone is a 25 years old female who was raised in a non-Roma area in Athens. Her family followed a non-Roma Greek mainstream lifestyle and owned a carpet shop. Her parents had attended school (compulsory education) for some years and for them, education holds significant value. Antigone does not talk about her Roma origin in public; nobody at school knew about it. At university she studied political science and public administration. She is involved as a mediator in Roma programmes running activities with Roma children in summer camps. She had been in a long term relationship with a Greek (non-Roma) partner.

3. Athena: Athena is a 35 years old female. She was raised in North West Greece, in a mixed area with some Roma where she had experienced discrimination from many teachers and classmates. Athena explained that these negative experiences had enabled her progression because she felt she was getting revenge through her educational progression. Athena's poor parents had encouraged her education as they wanted a better future for their children in terms of upward social mobility, although they themselves were not educated. Her father was a musician and both her parents were itinerant traders. The fact that Athena came from a low-income family resulted in her applying to study at a military higher institution and subsequently she conducted postgraduate studies abroad. She had been married to a (non-Roma) Greek military doctor for many years. When Athena left her local area, she stopped talking about her Roma identity. Athena remains very concerned about anonymity as she does not want her Roma background to become known in her professional environment.

4. Demosthenes: Demosthenes is an undergraduate male student reading mechanical engineering at a technical university. He was raised in a wealthy Roma family in a non-Roma area in Athens. Demosthenes currently works with his father; they buy fruit from farmers and sell them in organised street markets. However, recently their earnings have been affected by the financial crisis in Greece. Demosthenes highlighted the fact that his parents had attended school themselves as a factor which facilitated his educational progression as it had been important for them. He said he had not experienced racism at school because he passes, in terms of complexion as Greek, although his Roma origin was known. Demosthenes explained that his family clan does not know how to speak Romani. During his teenage years he had been pressurised by his family into getting engaged to a Roma girl. After some months, he decided to break up with her and thus avoid getting married at an early age.

5. Electra: Electra is a 20 years old female student. She was raised in a Roma area in Thessaloniki by a wealthy Roma family. She aspires to postgraduate studies and to hold a high position such as a senior executive in a company. Electra was encouraged to study by her family although her parents were not educated (her mother being an itinerant trader with a convenience store and her father a driver). She claims the fact that she has an older educated sibling has influenced her progression. She attributes a great part of Roma students' educational progression to teachers' contributions. She reported that she did not have experiences of intense discrimination owing to her Roma origin and she always talks openly about her background. In terms of love relationships, she explained that, for her, it is more important to find an educated partner rather than a Roma one.

6. Hector: Hector is a 25 years old male who was raised in Athens in a neighbourhood with many Muslims, Muslim Roma and non-nationals. Hector does not describe himself as a Roma but as a Muslim. At university he studied finance and when I met him, he was just starting his military service. He entered university through positive discrimination measures geared towards Muslim students in Greece. Ultimately, he wants to conduct postgraduate studies and work abroad. His father is illiterate and used to be a worker at a local factory but his mother had attended primary school. He explained that his parents were interested in his progression but did not have high expectations regarding their son's education although he had been a good student. He had been confronted with language difficulties in the early years of primary school because Turkish is his first language. Hector had received support from his teachers to address this. Moreover, he attributed a great part of his progression to the NGO which offered students in his local area help with their homework as well as many extra-curricular activities. Hector had experienced discrimination from people around him at school and in the wider society and many had given him the label 'the Turk'.

7. Hippocrates: Hippocrates is a 50 years old male. He is a doctor specialising in pulmonary medicine. He comes from Athens, from an area with many Roma residents. He was raised in a wealthy family and his parents had attended school and owned their own shop in their area. Hippocrates said that his family followed a more open-minded way of thinking. As far as education is concerned, Hippocrates' parents had been encouraging but did not have high expectations with respect to his studies despite the fact that during his school years, Hippocrates' performance had been excellent. Hippocrates repeatedly referred to the positive influence that the accepting local context of his area had on his educational progression. For higher education he attended the School of Medicine. He reported his lack of social connections as a factor which had prevented him from being hired in the public domain so he currently works as a private doctor with two private clinics in Athens. Hippocrates is married to a Roma woman and they have four children and he described his family lifestyle as mainstream. As far as their financial situation is concerned, they are well-off since Hippocrates earns well as a doctor. His children's performance at school is excellent. He is passing on the Romani language to his children who talk openly about their Roma origins. At one time Hippocrates was involved in politics having the aspiration to help the Roma. As a doctor, he tries to offer to the Roma community by providing free spirometry examinations to the Roma people.

8. Ifigeneia: Ifigeneia is a 35 years old female. She was raised by a wealthy Roma family which had many connections with politicians. She emphasised her father's family intergenerational role in championing Roma's rights. Her parents were not educated and were described as musicians. She spent part of her childhood abroad in the UK and at university she studied Law. She is involved in a political party. Ifigeneia was somehow an 'elite participant'. Ifigeneia disapproved of the use of the term 'Roma' for the Greek Tsigganoi and emphasised Greek Roma's Greekness. She is married to a Greek man and they have two children.

9. Iphicles: Iphicles is a 25 years old male student at the department of electrical engineering at a technological institution. Iphicles' parents are illiterate and they both work as itinerant traders. Iphicles spent part of his childhood abroad but his family had returned to Greece and lived in two areas with many Roma. Iphicles reported that his parents were trying to get a better future for him. His mother encouraged him to consider the idea of becoming an electrician. Moreover, his cousins who are electricians and happy with their profitable jobs encourage him to continue his studies. In terms of love relationships, he had never dated a Roma female.

10. Ismene: Ismene is a 25 years old female. She studied finance. Ismene comes from a low-income Roma family and had been raised in a humble home outside the city in a Roma neighbourhood/camp. She has 6 siblings. Her parents were not literate and were traders. She was encouraged by her father to study and had an inclination towards writing and literature and she had successfully won a prize in a literature competition. After completing her studies, Ismene started to become careful with whom she shared her Roma background. Moreover, she faced many problems in finding work after her graduating. She currently works at an employment agency and argued that her Roma background helped her to get this job as this particular agency implements programmes targeting Roma. She had also been involved in a non-governmental organisation related to Roma issues. She lives with her non-Roma Greek partner.

11. Jason: Jason is a 30 years old male who had entered the university department of theology. Currently he studies translation at a private tertiary institution because he aspires to work as a translator in the Council of Europe. Education had been of significant value for Jason's parents who were both literate and had attended lower high school classes. Jason's parents had high expectations for their children's

education. His family owned a carpet shop in Athens. Jason's attainment at school had been excellent and he did not have any negative experiences of discrimination probably because his Roma origin was not known. Jason used to be afraid of stigmatisation and even today, his friends and his girlfriend do not know about his Roma background. Jason was inspired by his educated aunt to go on to university and get involved in Roma issues. Jason currently works as a mediator for a programme on Roma education.

12. Laertes: Laertes is a 30 years old male lawyer who was raised in Athens, in an area where many Roma have lived for years. Laertes had dropped out from lower high school as a student and returned to education as an adult in order to achieve entrance to the law department. Both his parents have attended some classes at primary school and both were literate. They were itinerant traders and during summertime, they used to move to a Greek island to sell their goods. Education was not highly valued in his home so when Laertes completed primary school, he also started to work as an itinerant trader and he earned a lot of money. Many Roma live in Laertes' local area and some Roma-targeted interventions (funded by European sources and organised by the Greek General Secretariat for Adult Training) were run in the vicinity, such as the seminar for Roma journalists in which Laertes participated. During these seminars, Laertes met some educated Roma who served as exemplars for him. Later on, he worked as a mediator at the local municipality. It was there that he realised that he wanted to go back to school and study. As an adult he faced some difficulties in attending school regularly but flexible structures and arrangements, such as the Second Chance School, facilitated his attempt. Laertes regards his law degree as the crucial tool which will help the other Roma (e.g. regarding protecting their human rights). He expressed a view which was very critical towards the Greek state which keeps a 'silent tolerance' and does not make Roma parents send their children to compulsory education. He condemned the fact that the state does not sanction them.

13. Miltiades: Miltiades is a 40 years old male who currently works for a pharmaceutical company abroad. He was raised in Athens, in an area with many Roma residents. His family was well-off. Both his parents were peddler traders and had some basic literacy skills. Both his parents were very progressive and this is what Miltiades regards as having determined his and his brothers' educational pathways. When he completed high school in Greece, he sat the nationwide Panhellenic exams in order to enter medical school. His attempt was not successful and thus he decided to study abroad the subjects of physiology and molecular microbiology. He explained that he had had to work during his studies (e.g. as a barman, clothes salesman) in order to cover his expenses. He said that most of his friends abroad were Greeks and thus his Greek identity was reinforced. He also noted that few friends knew about his Roma origin.

14. Nestor: Nestor is a 55 years old male. He is a sociologist and is currently conducting his doctoral research on Roma issues. He was raised in a non-Roma area in Athens. His parents were itinerant traders and his family followed a mainstream lifestyle (e.g. they avoided arranging an early engagement for him). Nestor's mother, although illiterate, encouraged his educational progression. Nestor's Roma origin was not known at school. A key neighbour, a social worker, supported Nestor during his school years. She offered advice and found free tutorials and English lessons for him. He did not enter university the first time he sat the nationwide exams. Then, he joined a religious group which influenced him a lot and he was encouraged by a theologian to try for university again. Through his studies in social sciences, he became aware of Roma issues. He made contacts with academics who were interested in these topics and he gradually started getting involved in relevant activities. Nestor ended up working for a Greek university in a role contributing to Roma programmes. Nestor is well informed about Roma issues and made clear suggestions on how to improve educational

provision for Roma pupils. He emphasised Greek Roma's Greekness and expressed his opposition to the use of the term Roma.

15. Paris: Paris is a 20 years old male from North Greece. He studies at the department of accounting and finance and aspires to postgraduate studies abroad. Paris' parents are agricultural farmers. His father had attended some primary school classes while his mother had not attended school at all. Paris' mother is a Muslim Roma and speaks Romani but had not passed the language on to her sons. His family follows a mainstream lifestyle and they do not even practice Islam; for example, Paris said he had never been to a mosque. His mother tongue is Turkish and his bilingualism had been a significant problem with regards to his school progression. Paris did not have high grades at school but he was encouraged by his teachers to continue on to higher education. He used to achieve distinction in sport, for instance in running the 1,000metres. During his studies, Paris works to cover his expenses, mostly at hotels during the summertime. He currently works as a mediator for a Roma programme in North Greece. He encourages Roma students to go on to non-compulsory education and, as he said, he somehow serves as a positive example for them. He reported that the situation of the Roma in his area is very good as most of them have proper houses, have work and are able to send their children to school. In addition, extra support provided by the programme for Roma children (e.g. helping them with homework) helps the Roma students with their academic progression.

16. Patroclus: Patroclus is a 25years old male student of accounting and finance. He was raised inside a local Roma camp. His main concern is to find a stable job. He had attended the local technical high school and entered a higher education/technical institution in order to become an accountant. In particular, a teacher advised Patroclus to study finance and open an accountancy office in the Roma camp taking into consideration that Patroclus would be able to assist between 3,000 and

3,500 Roma clients in their area. Patroclus comes from a well-off Roma family of musicians which has a very good reputation in his area. He plays the clarinet, the toumperleki and sings as well, often performing professionally. Patroclus had attended a separate Roma school with other Roma children in their camp. In fact, he had started school late, at the age of 8 instead of 6 years. His attendance at a separate school complicated his transition to a mainstream lower high school and he reported having experienced intense discrimination at school. In contrast, he had not felt the same at university. In terms of love relationships, Patroclus is in a relationship with a non-Roma female he met at university. He said that wants to help the other Roma to become educated.

17. Pericles: Pericles is a 25 years old undergraduate male student at the department of social administration and political sciences. He was raised in a Roma camp. His father had been a musician and is currently a fruit seller while his mother is a housewife. Pericles' father had attended primary school until the 5th grade while his mother is illiterate. Education has held significant value for Pericles' family and his father encouraged his progression. During his school years, Pericles faced many difficulties. For instance, before they got a state-funded house, Pericles' family lived in a hut where he could not study and he attended the separate Roma school in his area. According to Pericles, the education provided there was of low quality and so he encountered many difficulties when he entered the local mainstream lower high school. These were not only related to academic tasks but also the social relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma students, particularly with regards to the discrimination against the Roma. Pericles' academic performance had always been good and he had always been a very good football player, being a member of the local football team. Pericles' choice of general high school had been very beneficial for him as it offered an established mainstream route to university entrance. Pericles had wanted to become a teacher but his performance was not good enough for joining the

department of education. Thus, he chose to enroll at the department of social administration where he could study excluded and vulnerable groups and focus on the Roma. His undergraduate dissertation explores issues pertaining to Roma education in his area. During his studies, he took part in an on-going programme for Muslim students in Thrace which offers internships for 6 months to eligible candidates.

18. Pylades: Pylades is a 20 years old undergraduate male student. He studies history, archaeology and social anthropology at a university in his city. Pylades lives at home with his parents, but frequently uses the university facilities as he studies in the university library and he eats at the university restaurant for free. Pylades was raised in a Roma area in a poor Roma family. His parents had been itinerant traders who have not attended school. His mother is illiterate and his father only attended the first year of primary school. However, his father encouraged his son's schooling. Pylades attended the mainstream local school where half of the students were Roma. His performance had not been exceptionally good but his teachers had been very encouraging towards him. Pylades highlighted experiences of discrimination mainly relating to his mobility difficulty. He has a physical disability and he referred to the intersectionality between his Roma background and his mobility disorder. However, this disability somehow motivated his entrance to university, as according to him, because of his disability, he did not get married early, something which has enabled his educational progression. He accessed higher education with recourse to the positive discrimination measures which exist for disabled students in Greece. Pylades plays basketball in a team where the players use wheelchairs and previously has achieved distinctions in athletics and discus throwing. He expressed his willingness to create a network with other educated Roma and was even willing to consider taking an active political approach. He wants the Roma to progress in education and he hopes that he himself can serve as a positive example.

19. Theaetetus: Theaetetus is a 35 years old priest monk who studies theology. He was raised in Athens, in an area where many Roma live. Theaetetus' family did not prioritise education. He was a good student and had not experienced any events of discrimination at school owing to his Roma background. He did not continue his schooling after completing lower high school. However, during his teenage hood, he joined a local monastery and later on went to Mount Athos where his Father Superior encouraged him to study at university. Thus, Theaetetus returned to school as a mature student. Theaetetus considers his current experiences, as a deacon in a ministry, and studying, as a type of 'spiritual training' which will facilitate his future monastical duties. According to Theaetetus, the church plays a role or could play a role in Roma's future educational progression by inspiring Roma students to set long-term intellectual goals.

20. Theagenes: Theagenes is a 20 years old undergraduate male student at a school of mining and metallurgical engineering. He aspires to follow postgraduate studies abroad and an academic career. Theagenes was raised in a well-off family which, in the main, followed a mainstream lifestyle. Theagenes' father used to keep an eye on his school performance and both his parents encouraged his school progression. Theagenes had experienced discrimination at school, but according to his narrative, these negative experiences had strengthened him. He is afraid of experiencing racism in his workplace in the future. His parents are also afraid of his not being accepted by his future partner's family, if he has a relationship with a non-Roma girl. In Theagenes' opinion, being an educated Roma decreases the risk of experiencing discrimination on grounds of Romaness because 'education compensates for the Roma origin'.

Appendix 7. Interview Schedule

Basic Research Question: How do the successful Roma account for their educational success?

Questions:

Based on their experiences,

Which a) factors, b) people and c) practices have encouraged them to succeed?

I) Beginning of the interview: Thank you very much for participating in my research project. I am currently undertaking a study on the successful educational paths among students of Roma heritage in Greece. Everything that is mentioned in the interview will be confidential and as I write up my research, I will ensure all responses will remain anonymous. It would be very helpful for me if I can audio-record the interview. If at any point you would like to terminate the interview, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your time and your cooperation.

II) Main Part of Interview

As I mentioned above, my research focuses on successful educational paths among Roma students. I was thinking that it would be really interesting to start from your current status of your educational path; your studies at University.

1. Would you like to tell me about your studies?

- Type of studies (undergraduate, postgraduate)
- Do you like what you study? (things you like less/most)
- Any difficulties you face?
- Relationships with people at University?
 - a) Courses b) Colleagues c) Academic community d) Professors
- How have you decided to choose to study this? (Has anybody affected you? How?)
- Perspectives? (Professional, Academic etc) – Personal dreams?
- Roma origin? Is it known? How is it handled? (Comparison with primary and secondary education)

- Any suggestions for improvements in higher education; improvements for Roma in higher education

Thank you for telling me about your present educational pathway. In my attempt to better understand your educational success, I would like to listen to your experiences from your early childhood.

2. Would you like to tell me about your Family?

2.1. Description of the family

2.1.1. Parents 2.1.2. Siblings 2.1.3. Grandparents 2.1.4. Other relatives
(significant for him/her)

their characteristics: a) age b) profession c) educational level

2.2. Relationships with the family

a) closer to sb?

b) educational incentives

- Was education important for your mother and your father?

- How do you know? - What did they want for you? - Their expectations for your future

- In relation to your studying/studies/school progress, how was your relationship with your mother and your father? With (older) siblings?

- Have they supported you to study? How?

2.3. Traditions-Customs-Values

- Important family or cultural celebrations, traditions or rituals in your life?

- religion: importance, ceremonies

- cultural influences still important today?

- How much of a factor in your life do you feel your cultural background has been?

- Do you speak Romani? (Language spoken home? With whom? In which cases? Aim?)

- As a child, what were you doing during your Leisure time? (Reading books?, Travelling? Holidays? Trips? Where?, Lessons (foreign languages?, musical instrument or sports etc)

Thank you for talking to me about your family. My emphasising your success in education makes your school years and your school experiences very important for my study.

3. Would you like to tell me about your School years?

3.1. Memories from school (first memory of attending school, memories from elementary school, memories from high school, best memories at school, worst memories at school)

3.2. Relationships with classmates (examples –incidents)

3.3. Relationships with teachers (favourite teacher, Why? Influences from him/her on you?) (if he/she refers to a good or bad teacher → clarify what he/she means with these terms -characteristics/behaviours) (Teachers' behaviour towards Roma students: in general; your case)

3.4. Important courses you took at school

3.5. Accomplishments in school –proud of them? - Which were your feelings about your progress in education?

3.6. Have you felt successful at school? How do you know that? (What about your grades?) Have your teachers recognised you as clever? (When did you first think that you were successful at school? How?)

3.7. Did you have any positive exemplars of successful (Roma)?

3.8. Did you have any personal motives, ambitions, expectations for educational success?
- Dreams you had for your future

3.9. Have you ever participated in special provision programmes for Roma students (such as reception classes)? (If yes, how was your experience?) How do you find them? Are they useful for the Roma participants?

- 3.10. Did people at school know that you had a Roma origin? -Handling of your Roma origin at school? (differences from primary to secondary school?)
- 3.11. Have you personally experienced a noteworthy event of exclusion or inclusion at school? - Have you personally experienced bullying - name calling at school?
- 3.12. Did you have Roma classmates / other Roma students at school? – Relationships with them?
- 3.13. Have you seen another Roma student experiencing exclusion/bullying at school? (Your reaction?)
- 3.14. (in general? Experiences of name-calling/exclusion outside school with classmates/neighbours?)
- 3.15. Have you felt that there was bias against Roma at your school? Why? Do you think that it happens in general (bias against Roma)?
- Comparison between primary school – high school (lower) – high school (senior) concerning: teachers' behaviour, the 'handling' of Roma identity, classmates' behaviour, relationships with friends (Roma and non Roma)
 - Which term does my participant use? Clarification of terms (Yiftos, Roma, Tsiganos: how they differ? Which one you prefer? Why?)
- 3.16. Do you feel that the Greek school offer equal opportunities to Roma students to go on to higher education?
- 3.17. Have you ever observed different reactions to people when they learnt that you have a Roma origin? How have you felt about it?
- 3.18. How easy/difficult is for a Roma/ child to succeed in Greek education?
- Main difficulties? - Factors which help their progress? Your case?
- 3.19. Have you attended private lessons (frontistiria) to help your progress/ to enter University?
- 3.20. General ideas about education
- a) role of education in a person's life
 - b) role of the teacher at a child's school progress

- c) relationship with teacher: importance
- d) relationship with classmates: importance

3.21. Suggestions

What do you suggest to improve Roma education in Greece?

- a) who/what can help;
- b) at which level/school year;
- c) appropriate teaching materials;
- d) special programmes

Thank you for telling me about your school years. As far as this study focuses on educational success and you are recognised as a successful case, I would like to know:

4) What does Success mean to you?

4.1. Can you give me examples of people (cases) that you think have succeeded in education? (How do you understand the term 'educational success'? What does it mean for you?)

4.2. Do you think that one who succeeds in education, also succeeds in his/her professional life or vice versa? (educational success and professional success are connected?)

-how? Examples?

4.3. Gender and success (educational and professional)

Do you think that studying at University is as difficult for boys as it is for girls? -Do you think that studying at University is as difficult for Roma boys as it is for Roma girls? Do boys and girls (Roma and non-Roma) have equal opportunities to succeed in their professional lives? Why?

After having talked in detail about your successful educational path, I would be interested to hear about your plans after University. What are you planning to do after completing your degree programme?

A) postgraduate studies?

B) Work

- How important is the professional career in your life/plans?

- Can you give me examples of people (cases) that you think have succeeded in their professions?

- a) things that he/she likes most/least about it,
- b) relationships with colleagues,
- c) problems that he/she thinks he/she has/may have,
- d) plans
- e) ambitions
- f) Have you worked during your childhood/adolescence? (Why?)
- g) the role of his/her Roma origin in finding a job/ professional progress

(If not covered above) Before finishing this interview, I would like to ask you about:

(General Questions)

- Significant events in your life up to now?
- What has been the greatest challenge of your life so far?
- What special people have you known in your life? Who shaped and influenced your life the most?
- [Why do you think that there are Roma who hide their cultural identity?]

- For male: military service, experiences
- For Roma who study disciplines which lead to teaching professions: Emphasis on how their experiences (as Roma students) can affect their profession in practice? Have these experiences affected what they have decided to study? How they understand their school experiences? etc...
- (If my participants are married/engaged at a young age, should I introduce themes concerning these topics? For example: Do you think that there are any aspects of your personal life which could be related to your educational success?)

III) Closure Questions

- Would you like to talk about yourself in a way that we haven't covered?
- Is there anything that we have left out and you would like to add?
- Do you feel you have given a fair picture of yourself?
- What are your feelings about this interview and all that we have covered?

Thank you very much for your participation in my research.

Information Sheet (Demographics, Profile)

- Gender: A. Female B. Male (C. Other)
- Date of Birth:
- What do you study?
- (Starting date for your studies):
- Grade (Points to enter University):
- Where do you come from? A. Rural Area B. Urban Area C. Suburban Area
- Number of family members:
- Age and Level of studies of family members:

Age	Father	Mother	You	Sibling 1	Sibling 2	Sibling 3
Years (Number)									
Level of Studies									

- When you were a student at school:
 - a) Where did you like to study?
.....
 - b) Did you have a personal computer?
.....
 - c) Have you attended any lessons (out of school) such as foreign language, music?
(clarify and state if you have a diploma/type of diploma)
.....
.....
 - d) Have you been a member of a club (sports, choir etc)? (clarify as much as you can)

.....
e) Which were your hobbies?

.....
f) Type of house where you were brought up: A. Flat B. Detached house C.

(Other)

g) Your house was A. family property B. rent C. Other

h) Personal/Family Annual Income: A. up to 8,000 € B. 8,001€ to 15,000€ C.

15,001€ to 25,000 € D. 25,001€ to 50,000€ E. 50,001€ to 100,000€ F. more than

100,001€

Appendix 8. Extract from Nestor's Interview

RESEARCHER 1: Good morning, Mr....

PARTICIPANT 1: Good morning.

RESEARCHER 2: Thank you very much for participating in my research project. I am currently undertaking a study on the successful educational paths among people of Roma heritage in Greece. Everything that is said in the interview will be confidential and as I write up my research, I will ensure all responses will remain anonymous. It would be very helpful for me if I can audio-record the interview. If at any point you would like to terminate the interview, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your time and your cooperation.

PARTICIPANT 2: Ok. Earlier, we were talking about the terms.

RESEARCHER 3: Yes, before switching on the recorder...

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes. I would say... My opinion is... the term "Tsigganos" is a historic term. Ok, maybe in the past we used this term in a pejorative way and this had always been the case; everywhere and always. But in Greece, we have a different social history here. This is what I believe. And we have used these terms, "Tsigganos", "Gypsy" without negative connotations, talking about some occupations etc... For example, gypsy means the blacksmith; gypsy means the musician. "The Gypsies have come, the musical instruments have come". I prefer the term "Greek Tsigganos" when I talk to other people, "Greek Roma" in this way.

RESEARCHER 4: Mm.

PARTICIPANT 4: Now the term "Roma" is the politically correct one in the European Union and shows that the "Tsigganoi" who are in the European Union consist of the same group of people, that they are aware of their particular features and they have a continuity. Historically, this is not

correct, because there is not a particular reality in a unified space where homogeneity can be found. The “Tsigganoi” are dispersed throughout Europe. (There are) Different social stories, different pathways. Other social events (took place) there, others here. So, this sense of common, this sense of community, does not make sense for me.

RESEARCHER 5: Mm.

PARTICIPANT 5: I would like to shed more light on the particularities, on the particular pathway that every group has, in order to help (all of us) understand the relationship that each group has with the wider society. And then, we can say “This is how they have gone ahead”.

RESEARCHER 6: Mm.

PARTICIPANT 6: Unfortunately, many times, these generalisations and some other conditions leave the things in an ambiguous context and this ambiguity is an important reason why these perceptions are still dominant; perceptions which are romantic or others according to which the Gypsies are always marginalised.

RESEARCHER 7: Would you like to talk a bit about the Greek case, because, the first time we met each other, you have said that in other countries such as Romania...

PARTICIPANT 7: Yes...

RESEARCHER 8: (In Romania) The Roma point out their different features...

PARTICIPANT 8: They have a different society...

RESEARCHER 9: What about here?

PARTICIPANT 9: And history. There, they are about 2,000,000 (people).

RESEARCHER 10: Mm.

PARTICIPANT 10: Yes. And they want to participate the most in what is going on. They are politically active. Maybe this is good up to a point, it is

very important. However, I feel that they might not wish to be separate from the dominant group. I have talked to many of them, men and women and I have told them “Ok, but understand and tell the others, the people you live with, the fellow human beings that we consist a part of this history. We were tormented but even this story of torment, the problems that we had as Gypsies, as Roma in Bucharest, they are all parts of this Romanian history”. From another perspective we might be a diversity, but this is your history as well, because it happened in this specific space, through a language, through structures; all these are also your history. This discrimination “A, you are foreigners, you have nothing to do with that” does not make sense for me. Here, in Greece, for many years, we were silent concerning the Gypsies... Of course there was a discussion in the European sphere and this search has come here as well, but my approach –and some others’ approach- is to study the Gypsies in relation to the Greek reality (context).

RESEARCHER 11: Mm.

PARTICIPANT 11: This is how we will better understand how the Gypsies followed their route. And I believe, for me, as a Greek Gypsy, it is very important to become better aware, to have self-consciousness, concerning who I am, and not be seen by the researchers as (something) separate. This (sense of) separate resulted in a methodological choice to study customs and traditions and things like these regarding the Gypsies as something separate from the rest of the society. And the Gypsies were never seen in relation to historical events neither in Greece nor abroad; (such as in relation to) the Greek Revolution in 1821 or the Industrial Revolution. I mean to see how the Gypsies relate to these narrations, what is the relationship. This approach allows to better understand their (the Gypsies’) contribution, how they suffered in relation to other facts which might have been simultaneous or (have happened earlier) etc. This is what is now happening in Greece with small, minimal steps... the new pieces of writing reject the story “The Gypsies have come from India”. The problem is not if they have come or not. This is what the language shows, what linguistics shows. However, every perception which

accompanies this story of the Indian origin -and what they are - that the Gypsies do not change, that the Gypsies were always the same and were marginalised, that they are “pariahs/outcasts”, that they have not offered anything, that they move all the time and many others oppress us, the members of this community. And as you can see, personally, I am not happy with that. That is the reason why I am opposed to this story. And I want something more satisfactory. This more satisfactory thing is what I noted earlier: to study the Gypsies through a wider perspective, with correlations, because this approach “They have come from India” implies continuity, but at the same time it is unhistorical. “These people do not have a history, do not have a culture/civilisation” and so on.

Appendix 9. Example of Coding One Interview

Although I worked with the original transcripts in Greek, I use the following extract as an example of the way I carried out coding during my data analysis:

RESEARCHER 77: Fine. Mr (...), I would like you to tell me, because this study focuses on the success, on this concept...

PARTICIPANT 77: Yes.

RESEARCHER 78: What does success in education mean for you?

PARTICIPANT 78:...

RESEARCHER 79: Try to give me some examples of cases of people who have succeeded in education or try to tell me how you understand/explain the success in education.

PARTICIPANT 79: How I could define the success in education? Should/May I try to explain that in relation to my case?

RESEARCHER 80: Yes. In relation to your case.

PARTICIPANT 80: I consider myself as somehow successful –however, during these years I have been to several professional fields. But I made it... I regard myself as successful somehow, because I have a university degree which allows me to ... stand at a better level professionally. Em, maybe, for someone else... For me, I feel that, although I do not earn much money, I had a path in education which was continuous. Despite my having worked as dishwasher and as a security man, I was looking for education. I continued. This is success for me: this searching, this continuity in what I am doing and the fact that I insist and I try. I mean that life activities/difficulties have not “broken” me. I have an educational continuity. And that is what I am considering as success, for this particular profession, for what I am doing. Another one could say “I have been a trader for 40 years and this is success for me”. For me, success is

that from when I first started to search, from the years after high school, I am still active, I fight for that and this had given me an intellectual profit and a smile. I say to myself –recognising my being moderate- “Well done. You go on”. That’s all. And I understand what can come up from this... This is what I consider as success for me, personally. [Recorder, time: **1.02.59**]

RESEARCHER 81: In your professional life, how do you describe success?

PARTICIPANT 81: The fact that all this work which is based on my degree and my choice to work on the Gypsies have led to my earning my living. I am a public servant. Through this programme (at university of ...), according to Pavlopoulos’ Law, I succeeded in staying as a permanent(public) servant. So, either as an English teacher, either as an external collaborator working on the Gypsies or even now, I have worked very hard. But, I have a continuity. And I have a job right now.

RESEARCHER 82: On something that you like and want.

PARTICIPANT 82: Yes, exactly. It is something which touches me. It is not the money. I am not the trader who had earned a lot of money and I now have houses and so on. But this flavour of happiness that I experience is different. Inside my soul, I feel indescribably happy “Look, you have made it somehow and you can offer things”. And it is mainly this educational searching which gives you this happiness. I mean that I am not disappointed. I am happy with this whole route which might have had some ... might not have been always continuous...but... Maybe there were times when I was ready to lose my searching but I started searching again. This searching for education, for culture and in relation to the Gypsies is what I define as success for me. This, the fact that I have formed this capital, this searching for an educational, an intellectual capital...

RESEARCHER 83: So, Mr (...), are the educational and the professional success connected in your case?

PARTICIPANT 83: Yes. Somehow. In relation to the Gypsy issue, yes. It happened to be together regardless the fact that I had to do some other jobs for some time, something that we might all do.

Appendix 10. Notes & Extracts from the Summary of Nestor's Interview

Nestor, PhD in Sociology, Wednesday 1st August 2012, Tuesday 7th August 2012, Athens

Nestor asked me to arrange a first meeting in order to meet each other and talk about my study. A trusting climate had been created by the time we arranged our interview meeting which was held a week later. Nestor is currently a PhD student (the sociology of space: research on Roma). The interview with Nestor was very interesting for me and I felt lucky that I found him at the beginning of my research as he was not only a very forthcoming participant himself, but he also introduced me to some other educationally successful Roma. Nestor has also published on the Roma in Greece. He is one of the authors of an academic publication I use in my thesis.

Terminology used

In the beginning of the interview, Nestor said he prefers the term "Greek Tsigganos" when talking about the Roma in Greece (*Nestor*, 3). He said that the term "Tsigganos" is a historic term (*Nestor*, 3) and that all the terms related to the Roma have been used in positive and negative ways. Even the term Gypsy had been used in non-pejorative ways. In particular he said (*Nestor*, 3):

And we have used these terms, "Tsigganos", "Gypsy" without negative connotations, talking about some occupations etc... For example, gypsy means the blacksmith; gypsy means the musician. "The Gypsies have come, the musical instruments have come".

Nestor is opposed to the term Roma which appears as the politically correct one in the European Union (*Nestor*, 4) arguing that this approach emphasises a minority understanding for the Roma - something which is not accurate historically and is not accepted by the Roma in

Greece. Nestor focuses on the particularities of each Roma group (e.g. Roma in Greece in relation to the Greek context) (*Nestor*, 5). In particular, he said (*Nestor*, 4):

Now the term “Roma” is the politically correct one in the European Union and wants to show that the “Tsigganoi” who are in the European Union consist of the same group of people, that they are aware of their particular features and they have a continuity. Historically, this is not correct, because there is not a reality in a unified space where homogeneity can be found. The “Tsigganoi” are dispersed throughout Europe. (There are) Different social stories, different pathways. Other social events (took place) there, other events here. So, this sense of common, this sense of community, does not make sense for me.

(Thus, I used the term Gypsy in Nestor’s transcript and when citing Nestor’s words in my thesis)

...

Roma’s early marriages

Early-engagement for Nestor

Nestor’s mother had not followed the traditional custom to encourage little Nestor’s getting engaged from his school age –an event which would have affected his pathway if it had happened. Nestor said (*Nestor*, 85, 88):

When I was at the 2nd, the 3rd grade of primary school, some friends (clans) from Agia Varvara have come home in order to arrange a type of children engagement (‘mikroarravoniasmata’). It was a very beautiful girl ... called Hebe, but my mother had refused. ... However, as I said before, if I had lived in Agia Varvara, I believe that it would have been really hard (to avoid it/getting married early).

Nestor thinks that this situation gradually changes and that the Roma will realise that trade is not enough and they will let their children go on into higher levels of schooling instead of encouraging early

marriages. However, again, it seems more difficult for the girls (*Nestor*, 91). That is what Nestor said (*Nestor*, 91):

Things change gradually. Gradually, things change. Some people understand –I am talking about Agia Varvara- that trade is not the only activity needed. However, for the girls it is doubtful. I mean that for the young children who now attend the 6th grade of primary school, who attend primary school, children who are now born and their families have understood what is going on, how important education is... I believe that (these parents) will push their children and they will ... (get married later) or they will not, they will not push their children to get married. They will offer them an educational direction.

....

End of the Interview

Nestor finished by emphasising the cases of people who inspired him and by encouraging me to pose this as my personal goal: to inspire people through this thesis. Nestor said (*Nestor*, 108, 109, 110):

Through this research study that you are conducting... you could inspire other people. ... You could become what we call a “chain link”. ... When I met Menelaos and Phaedra¹, I was inspired by them. You can inspire people. I mean just this; to have a closer relationship with them. This woman (my neighbour) had held my hand, experienced the risk and took me to the extra lessons. The other person talked to me in person. This is very important. I mean that the institutions are very important. But, the people (there) play an important role in most cases and you do not know (cannot predict) who is going to get affected/inspired by you. Something might happen/change. And this is the reason why your study is really significant; it can bring crucial results, if you invest in that. I mean if it is not for you just to get your PhD diploma and then ok “What am I going to gain?”... Through this study, you can inspire people to have school success... This is the crucial point. So, you get some parts of us, you use them externally, but through this transfer, you might inspire. This should be a goal for you...

¹ Pseudonyms for two educated Roma that Nestor had met.

Appendix 11. Example of Summarising Nestor's Accounts according to my Research Questions

A. Success Factors

- Significant others: [Ms Elli (help, expectations), The Care Centre for Family and Child, the theologian, the religious group he joined]
- Parental support – private tutoring
- Locality issues (away from Roma areas)
- Religion's influence in his progression (in terms of belief in God's help and additional cultural capital).
- Hard work to enter university as an adult – private tutorials – additional courses offered at high school/'Metalykeiaka courses'
- Early success experiences: not many, as Nestor was not a high-performer, Good general grade when he graduated from high school
- Lack of exclusionary experiences (in general)
- Contacts with academics/Institutions related to Roma issues [General Secretariat for Adult Education] in Greece and abroad (during his higher studies)

[Nestor seems to recognise three factors which facilitated his professional pathway: his skills/ability, his strategic attempt to contact people/knock on appropriate doors and some individual persons' help (*Nestor*, 58)].

B. Success (Perceptions)

Educational Success: a university degree as evidence of success which also helps the future professional life- continuous intellectual searching - internal feelings of achievement/satisfaction and the idea of non-stop (always evolving and thus unfulfilled) intellectual search.

Professional Success: He regards himself as professionally successful because he earns his living from a profession a) related to his studies, b) that he loves, c) through which he offers and d) which is related to his intellectual quest (*Nestor*, 81, 82).

Nestor feels successful. (He described success on the basis of his case)

Nestor said that in his case, educational and professional success were interrelated.

Gender influences Roma girls' progression

Locality issues affect Roma's progression

C. Suggestions on how to improve educational provision for the Roma

- Teacher's role important but insufficient
- Need for holistic interventions
- Against a separate Roma school
- Curriculum: include Roma's contribution to Greek civilisation

Appendix 12. Roma Role Models as a Factor in Roma's Success: An Example of How I Grouped My Participants' Accounts for One of the Identified Success Factors

Ismene

Roma Role Models? There were no other educated Roma in Ismene's local area (*Ismene*, 81). Ismene mentioned that she admired a distant relative who was educated (*Ismene*, 81).

Antigone

Her uncle: Antigone states that her uncle had served as a positive exemplar for her educational pathway (*Antigone*, 135). Moreover, she thinks that her uncle had a wider impact on her life – a way of thinking (*Antigone*, 136). She calls him a fighter (*Antigone*, 136) as he is the researcher who fights for the Roma in the field (*Antigone*, 137).

Ifigeneia

Role models in Ifigeneia's family: Ifigeneia's older siblings have served as positive exemplars for her progression. Her parents were also exemplars for her as they left the traditional Roma lifestyle and wanted their children to become educated. Even today, on occasions of birthdays and name days, Ifigeneia's mother wishes her Roma children/grandchildren to be "healthy and useful for society" (*Ifigeneia*, 69). For Ifigeneia, parents always play the most significant role in their children's progression owing to their persistence, vision and goals (*Ifigeneia*, 70).

The role of positive examples in Roma children's progression: Ifigeneia thinks that examples of educated Roma people can have a positive impact on young Roma children - the way it usually happens for

all young students who get exposed to 'positive examples' (Ifigeneia, 113). However, she explains that if this successful Roma person is not highly appreciated by the Roma student's family (e.g. because this person participates in Roma programmes in order to earn money), then the idea of the role model cannot be effective (*Ifigeneia*, 113). At this point, Ifigeneia highlights that it is not only academic progression that matters (*Ifigeneia*, 113). In particular, she says that it is not possible for all the students to follow professions such as doctors, lawyers and economists. She thinks that occupations such as being a hairdresser or an athlete could be more accessible and attractive to Roma children (*Ifigeneia*, 114).

Alcmene

Roma Role Models for Alcmene? Alcmene had not been exposed to any successful Roma examples when she was a kid (*Alcmene*, 210). However, there were some other Roma who have attended technical high schools in her area (*Alcmene*, 211).

Electra

Older sister's influence regarding Electra's Progression

Electra recognises the fact that she has an older educated sibling as significant regarding her progression. She talked of her sister's influence on her own progression. In particular, Electra said (*Electra*, 39):

I do remember her (my sister) ... her books, her notes, her notebooks, her school bag, her pencil case, everything... I remember her studying, staying awake all night (in order to study), getting stressed, going to the extra lessons... I remember all these things... I remember my parents, their getting worried about her (about her studying for so many hours)... I remember the day she went to university for the first time and my feeling happy for that... She was standing by me... She used to provide advice on how to study, how to think, what I should do in my life... to help me with specific school issues... and with my behaviour... It is a great

privilege to have an older sibling who has already taken a step further...

Iphicles

Roma Role Models: Iphicles was influenced regarding studies by his older cousins who have completed technical high school and work as electricians (*Iphicles*, 22).

Theaetetus

- **Roma Role Models & Theaetetus' progression:** Theaetetus remembers that his family used to talk with feelings of admiration about two educated Roma people in their area.

- **The role of Roma exemplars (Insufficient):** Theaetetus, based on discussions with young Roma, believes that positive Roma role models are insufficient to influence them. In particular, he says that (*Theaetetus*, 195, 197):

When the Roma realise that there are alternative choices, they have already missed the chance to choose; ... they cannot choose anymore as they have spent years, they have made their own families...

Roma exemplars might be more useful for younger children, according to Theaetetus. However, once again, based on his experiences, he sees that Roma do not care so much about education. For instance, he says (*Theaetetus*, 199, 200):

Even in my case, when I say that I am a Roma priest, Roma children are not interested in my educational pathway ... They just keep in mind that I might be able to offer them material things... And this is how it works for them... They grow up finding out that the others (can) provide materials... They do not seek intellectual goods...

- **Roma's participation in Roma's interventions:** Theaetetus thinks that educated Roma's presence/participation in Roma interventions will be

helpful, as these Roma can grasp Roma's understanding of things (*Theaetetus*, 200, 201).

Laertes

“Mentoring/Sponsorship”: Laertes talked of three Roma people he met during the seminars he attended addressing the Roma in his area. These people offered him help and the chance to attend conferences and inspired him to study (*Laertes*, 193).

Miltiades

He thinks that interventions addressing Roma parents through presenting positive exemplars of educated Roma would encourage their Roma children's progression by making them understand that it is education which will 'equip' Roma children for their lives (*Miltiades*, 157).

Pericles

Roma Role Models: Pericles remembers he had been influenced by older Roma in his area who had been at high school when he was attending primary school. Although these Roma students did not go on, they had served as positive examples for him at this early stage (*Pericles*, 167).

Patroclus

Roma Role Models: Patroclus said that there have been some other older Roma students -who were at lower high school when Patroclus was at primary school- who served as positive examples for him (*Patroclus*, 61, 62).

Jason

Roma Role Models: Jason's educated aunt served as an example for Jason's educational progression. In addition, she inspired Jason to get involved in Roma issues (*Jason*, 82).

The self-improvement process & role models: Jason said that it is necessary to give the Roma children the motivation to become better (*Jason*, 179). Roma Role Models can inspire Roma children to go on (*Jason*, 179).

Paris

Roma Role Models: Paris believes that role models can have a positive impact on Roma children's educational progression (*Paris*, 274).

Appendix 13. Table Used for Data Analysis Regarding the Factors which Facilitated my Participants' Success

	Educational importance for the family	Significant Others	Teacher's Influence	Roma Role Models	Religion	Individual Qualities	Early Success Experiences	Locality	Money	Help with homework	Peers?	
1. Ismene	X, father	X, the librarian	-	- (partially)	X	X Hard work, Resilience? Persistence? –Grit?	X Literature competition	Urban Roma area (camp), she left to study	Low-income, but settled	Out of school support (ενισχυτική διδασκαλία), she repeated the last year of high school	Roma friends who were at school, good non Roma friends at Uni	
2. Antigone	X	X neighbour + uncle	-	Uncle	X Religious family	X	X	Urban, non-Roma	Intermediate	Out of school support (φροντιστήρια)		
3. Ifigeneia	X	X family members + tutor	-	Family Members	X	X	Well at school	Abroad (non-Roma area)	wealthy			Educational system abroad
4. Alcmene	X	teachers	X	-	....	X	Great at school	Urban, Roma area	wealthy	Out of school support (ενισχυτική διδασκαλία)	Lost her Roma friends	NGO?
5. Electra	X	X sister, grandmother, teachers, father	X	sister		On her own		Urban, Roma area	wealthy			
6. Athena	X		X (but also negative experiences)	Distant relatives		Resilience	X	Urban with many Roma (non-Roma)	Low-income			
7. Iphicles	X	Parents, cousins, priest	Kind of	cousins	x	x	...	Abroad, non-Roma area helped,	Intermediate	...	X	Educational system abroad, music

								Roma area holds him back				groups Need for a stable job (experiences of discrimination)
8. Theaetetus	no	Priest	encouraging	2 Roma	X	...	X	Roma area (monastery)	Low-income			
9. Laertes	no	2 Roma	...	2 Roma	X	persistence	...	Roma area – advanced level	Low-income			Seminars for Roma
10. Miltiades	X	Family, good friends	X	Not educated		X		Roma area, advanced	Intermediate/wealthy	X	Good influence	
11. Nestor	X	Neighbour Theologian			X	Hard work		non-Roma area	Intermediate	Out of school support (φροντιστήρια, μεταλυκειακά)		Institutions such as the Care Centre, religious group
12. Pericles	X	...	X	X	X	Hard work, luck	X	Roma area, camp school	Low-income - settled (state house)			Sports groups
13. Patroclus	X	Friends at gym	X	Older Roma students		X	X	Roma area, camp	wealthy	(all-day school ολοήμερο)		music
14. Hippocrates	X	Parents, non-Roma friends	X	Other Roma...	...	inclination	X	Roma area	wealthy	X	Non-Roma peers	Extra out-of-school support
15. Jason	X	Parents, non-Roma friends, Nestor	X	Uncle	x	resilience	x	Non-Roma area	Intermediate	fine	Non-Roma friends	Music band
16. Demosthenes	X	parents	...	...	...	...	...	Non-Roma area	wealthy	X	Non-Roma friends	
17. Theagenes	X	Parents, non-Roma peers, older brother	X...	-	...	X	X	Non-Roma area	wealthy	X	Non-Roma friends	

18.Paris	X	Parents, teachers	X	...	...*	X	... sports	Non-Roma area (mixed area)	Intermediate	X	Non- Roma friends	Sports * value of extra- curricular activities
19.Pylades	X	teachers	X		X	persistence		Roma area	Low-income			Disability (positive discrimination)
20.Hector	X		X		(minority)		X	Non-Roma area	Low-income	NGO		Minority background (positive discrimination) NGO

Table. 1. Table Used for Data Analysis regarding the Factors which Facilitated my Participants' Success

Appendix 14. Table 1. Information about my Participants' Families (Parental Education and Occupation, Family Size, Siblings' Education)

Participant	Maternal Education	Maternal Profession	Paternal Education	Paternal Profession	Number of siblings ¹	Order of Birth ²	Education of Siblings
1. Alcmena (F) (W)	M: literate, She took the primary school certificate after courses for adults organised by a Female Roma organisation in their area	Itinerant trader, She owns a small convenience store	F: he did not complete primary school	driver	2	1st	Younger Sister (2 nd child): HE, Younger Brother (3 rd child): student, Technical High School
2. Antigone (F) (A)	M: part of lower high school	Carpet trading, owning a carpet shop	F: part of lower high school	Carpet trading, owning a carpet shop	1	2 nd Last	Brother 1 st : HE student
3. Athena (F) (P)	M: illiterate	M: Trader, coffee cup-reader	F: illiterate	F: Musician trader	3	1 st	Younger sister: completed primary school 2 younger brothers: primary school
4. Demosthenes (M) (W)	M: primary school	Fruit trading	F: secondary school	Fruit trading	2	1st	Younger Brother (2 nd child): HE Younger Sister (3 rd child): student (High School)

¹ The number of siblings each participant has

² Is my participant the first, second, third child of the family?

5. Electra (F) (W)	M: literate, She took the primary school certificate after courses for adults organised by a Female Roma organisation in their area	Itinerant trader, She owns a small convenience store	F: he did not complete primary school	driver	2	2nd	Sister 1 st : HE Brother 3 rd : student, Technical High School
6. Hector (M) (P)	M: primary school	housewife	F: illiterate	Local factor, unemployed	1	2 nd (last)	Older Brother: completed Technical High School
7. Hippocrates (M) (W)	M: Part of primary school	Owning a store	F: Private primary school	Owning a store	2	3 rd	2 sisters: completed lower high school
8. Ifigeneia (F) (W)	M: part of primary school Courses of dressmaking	Owing music stores	F: part of primary school	Owning music stores	4	5 th Last child	All older siblings had progressed in education Sister (1 st child): HE, medicine Sister (2 nd child): Political Sciences Brother (3 rd child): Management
9. Iphicles (M) (A)	M: illiterate	Itinerant trading	F: illiterate	Itinerant trading	2	3 rd Last	Sister 1 st : primary school Brother 2 nd : primary school
10. Ismene (F) (P)	M: not educated	M: cleaner	F: not educated	F: Fruit trader	6	1 st	Many siblings, health issues Younger brother (the 2 nd child): had not continued into education. Two younger sisters: attend public Institutions of Further education (one is

							studying pharmacist assistant and the other one esthetician/beautician); Another younger sister completes high school two youngest children: lower high school
11. Jason (M) (A)	M: part of lower high school	Carpet trading, owning a carpet shop	F: part of lower high school	Carpet trading, owning a carpet shop	1	1st	Sister 2 nd : HE
12. Laertes (M) (P)	M: literate, she completed primary school	Housewife/trading	F: literate, he attended two classes of primary school	Itinerant trading	3	3 rd	Brother 1 st : mature student – Theology Brother 2 nd : mature student-High School Sister 4 th : sister, primary school, aspirations to become mature student
13. Miltiades (M) (A/W)	M: compulsory education	Itinerant trading	F: compulsory education	Itinerant trading	2	1st	Brother 2 nd : HE, Brother 3 rd : HE, European Studies
14. Nestor (M) (A)	M: Illiterate	Itinerant trading (curtains, embroidery)	F: part of primary school	Itinerant trading (curtains, embroidery)	0	1st	-
15. Paris (M) (A)	M: no schooling	farmer	F: some classes of primary school	farmer	3 brothers	3 rd	1 st older Brother: primary school 2 nd older brother: primary school 3 rd younger brother: current student/lower high school

16. Patroclus (M) (W)	M: not educated	Owning a grocery store	F: not educated	Owning a grocery store	2	3 rd	2 older sisters: completed lower high school
17. Pericles (M) (P)	M: illiterate	M: housewife	F: part of primary school	F: musician, Fruit seller	3	2 nd	Older sister (1 st child): primary school Younger sister (3 rd child): primary school Younger sister with special needs (4 th child): currently High School student
18. Pylades (M) (P)	M: illiterate	Itinerant trading	F: first year of primary school	Itinerant trading	3	3 rd	Older brother (1 st child): High school Older brother: (2 nd child): part of high school Younger brother (4 th child): currently high school student
19. Theaetetus (M) (P)	M: literate, she completed primary school	She had worked in a factory, Housewife/trading	F: literate, he attended two classes of primary school	Itinerant trading	3	1 st	Brother 2 nd : mature student, High School Brother 3 rd : mature student, HE Sister 4 th : she wants to study
20. Theagenes (M) (W)	M: primary school	Fruit trading	F: secondary school	Fruit trading	2	2 nd	Older Brother (1 st child): HE Younger Sister (3 rd child): student